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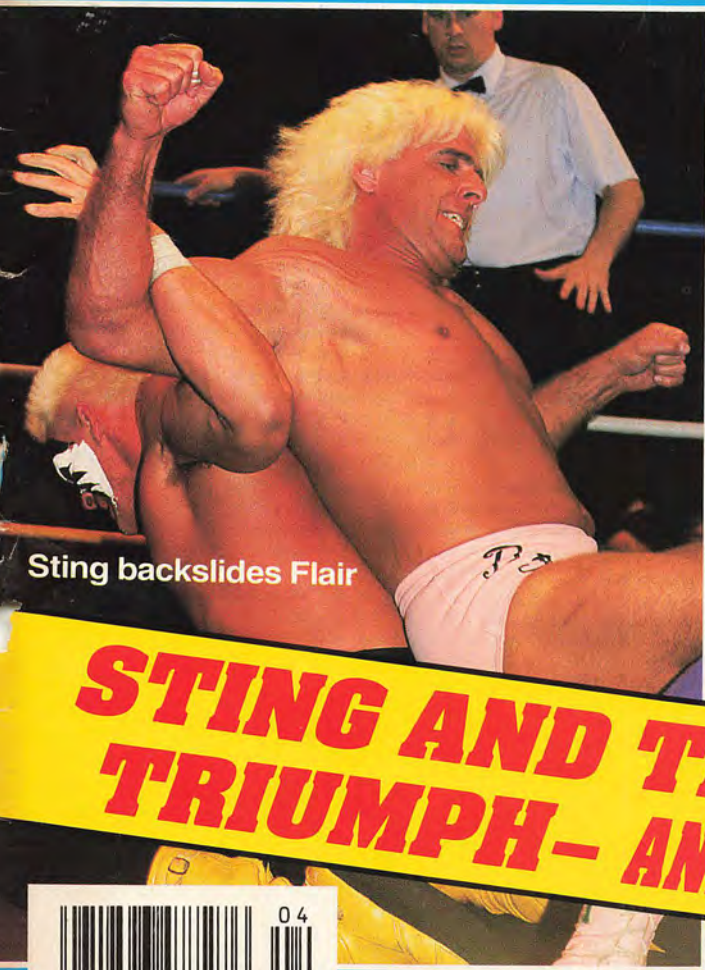
April 1990
47727

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\$2.50 Canada
£1.75 U.K.

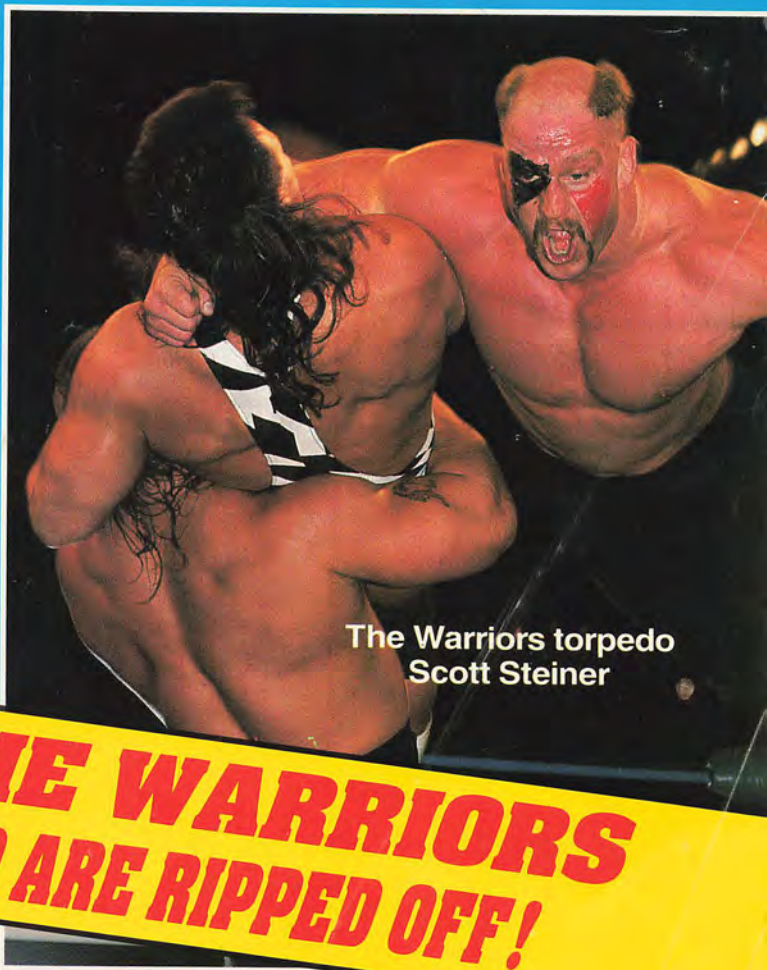
Wrestling

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STARRCADE '89: NIGHT OF THE IRON MEN!



Sting backslides Flair



The Warriors torpedo
Scott Steiner

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INSIDE

Wrestling

CONTENTS/APRIL 1990

- 4 **SINCERELY YOURS**
Pay The Piper; No Zenk; Kokinut
- 6 **EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK by Stu Saks**
A hopeful overview of this edition of *Inside Wrestling*
- 8 **BEHIND THE DRESSING ROOM DOOR by David Rosenbaum**
Starrcade enters a new and better era
- 10 **ON THE ROAD with Craig Peters**
How the AWA's Team Challenge Series turned cold
- 12 **NAMES MAKIN' NEWS by Bill Apter**
All the latest news as of press time
- 14 **THE INSIDER by Eddie Ellner**
Recent events get the '90s off to a horrifying start
- 16 **ON ASSIGNMENT by Liz Hunter**
"The Model" is no role model any longer
- 18 **WHERE ARE THEY NOW?**
Updates on four major mat stars
- 19 **CAPSULE PROFILE #165**
A mini-biography plus pinup of Rick Martel
- 22 **NEWS FROM THE WRESTLING CAPITALS**
Eyewitness coverage of the month's major matches
- 24 **MATT BROCK'S PLAIN SPEAKING**
Memories of Starrcade, Thesz, red meat, and more
- 27 **WHY DUSTIN RHODES MUST ABANDON HIS AMERICAN DREAM**
"The Natural" must come out of his father's shadow
- 30 **ULTIMATE WARRIOR—HULK HOGAN OR BUST!**
Only one man stands in the Warrior's championship path
- 32 **IRON MAN STING PINS RIC FLAIR:
AND LEX LUGER IS GETTING TITLE SHOTS!**
It appears the Stinger is getting stung
- 34 **IRON TEAM ROAD WARRIORS:
THE FANS ARE KEEPING THEM FROM THE BELTS!**
Animal and Hawk must get mean to get the gold
- 36 **BUZZ SAWYER: "THE MAD DOG IS Madder THAN EVER!"**
The newest J-Tex member tells all in this month's "Hotseat"
- 40 **LOST IN THE SHUFFLE 1990: FIVE WWF STARS WHO FACE OBLIVION**
It's time for these stars to take stock of themselves
- 44 **ONE ON ONE**
Jerry Lawler vs. Kerry Von Erich
- 64 **OFFICIAL WRESTLING RATINGS**
Top 15 rankings in seven important categories
- 65 **INSIDE WRESTLING ROLL CALL OF CHAMPIONS**
The most comprehensive championship directory available anywhere
- 66 **BLAST FROM THE PAST**
This month in wrestling history

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Starrcade action
by Bill Apter

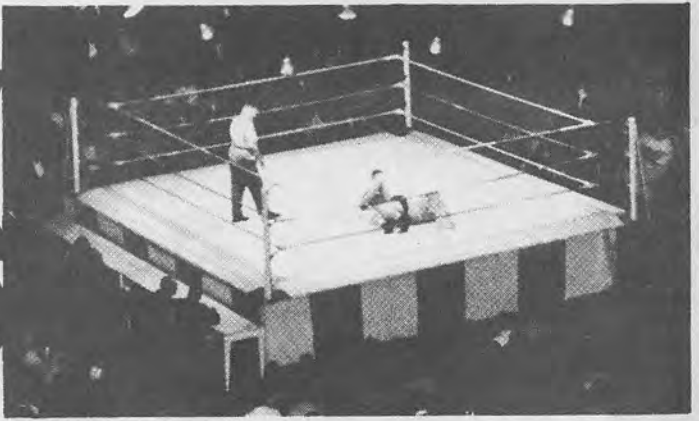
The Ultimate Warrior
by David Fitzgerald

INSIDE WRESTLING is published monthly by G.C. London Publishing Assoc., Box 48, Rockville Centre, NY 11571. Second Class Application Pending at Rockville Centre, NY, 11571 and Additional Offices. POSTMASTER: Send change of address notices to "Inside Wrestling," 75 Commercial St., Plainville, NY, 11803. Single copy price \$1.95 (\$2.50 in Canada, £1.75 in U.K.). Not responsible for the loss or nonreturn of unsolicited articles or photographs, which will not be returned unless accompanied by a self-addressed envelope bearing the proper amount of postage. No part of this magazine may be reproduced without the written permission of the publisher. All rights reserved. U.S. & Canadian distribution by Kable News Company, 11 West 42nd St, New York, NY, 10036; International distribution (excluding U.K.) by Worldwide Media Service Inc., 115 East 23rd St., New York, NY, 10010; U.K. distribution by Comag, Tavistock Rd., West Drayton, Middlesex UB77QE, England. Printed in U.S.A.

SEND LETTERS TO:

SINCERELY YOURS

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PAY THE PIPER

The story "Sex Symbol Showdown: Rude's Out . . . Piper's In . . . And The Fans Love It!" (February 1990) reflected my feelings exactly. I used to think Rick Rude was the sexiest man going, but I took a look at Roddy Piper and my feelings immediately

changed! Piper is everything Rude isn't. He has loads more charm and is a much better wrestler. It's a shame he isn't wearing a championship belt, but titles never meant much to Roddy anyway.

I don't think we'll have to worry about Rude pinning Roddy, unless

Rude or Bobby Heenan blatantly cheat. That's the only way they'll ever be able to beat the "Rowdy One"!

BARBARA MANATT

Inola, OK

Roddy Piper has to learn that you just can't move in and replace Rick Rude in the hearts of fans such as myself. I have been a loyal Rude supporter for four years now, since way before he entered the WWF. Where has Piper been most of that time? Making bad movies.

GINA DAVIS
Rutland, VT

AWA BIG MOUTH

I remember when Larry Zbyszko was in the NWA. At that time, he was the Western States champion and Gary Hart was his manager. Back then, I had respect for Zbyszko, even if no one else did. When he returned to the AWA and became World champion, I thought we were finally going to see a more down-to-earth Zbyszko.

I was totally wrong. Zbyszko has done nothing but duck the competition. The AWA ought to do something about him soon because the fans are getting tired of it. I'm starting to lose respect for the AWA itself.

Zbyszko, shut your big mouth—permanently!

BRIAN WERTH
Neenah, WI

NO ZENK

Your article on Tom Zenk in the February 1990 issue ("Five Sure Roads To Success: Our Advice To 'Z-Man'")



AWA World champion Larry Zbyszko shoves Nikita Koloff out of the ring. Reader Brian Werth accuses Zbyszko of ducking the competition all the time.

Tom Zenk'') should make a lot of sense to Mr. Zenk. After all, his career really isn't going anywhere at this point. It's obvious he's not going to achieve the fame that was predicted for him.

This is one "Z-Man" who gives me the Z's: He puts me to sleep whenever I watch him wrestle. He needs a charisma transplant. He's being outshone by a younger and more talented Brian Pillman. Don't even compare him to Sting.

Maybe what Zenk needs to do is go to a smaller federation, win a title there, then return to the NWA. He'd better do *something*.

JEAN CINELLI

Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario

SNUKA THE MADMAN

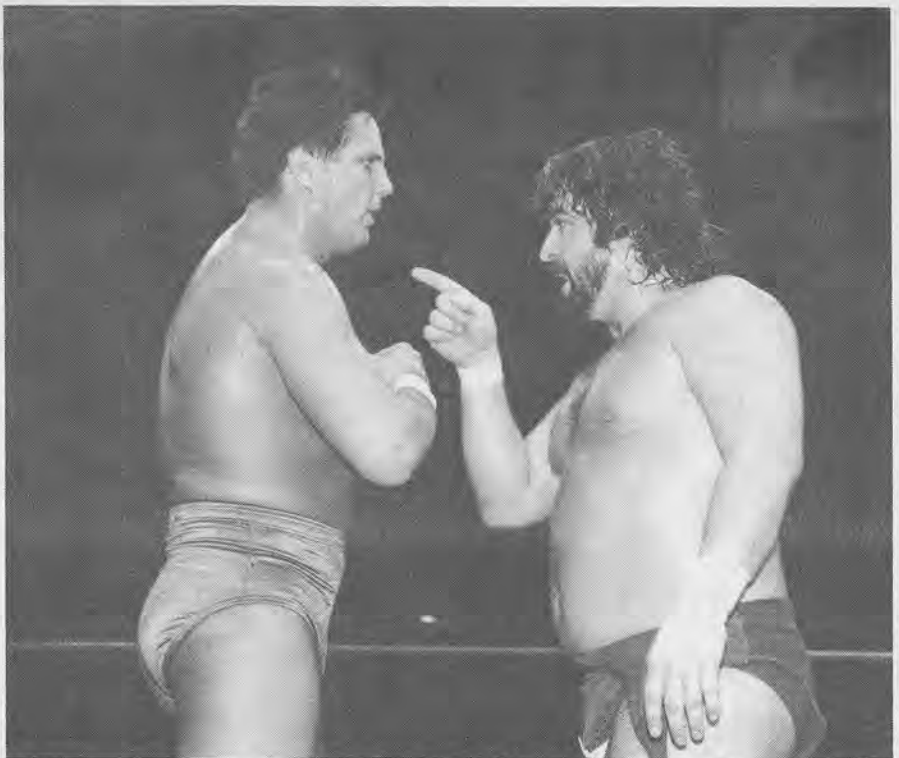
That does it. After I read "Jimmy Snuka: Are These The Eyes Of A Madman?" (February 1990), I became convinced that "Superfly" has totally lost it. He doesn't care about winning his matches. He just wants to hurt his opponents because he's still angry about what Roddy Piper did to him years ago.

If Snuka focused on the Intercontinental title, for instance, he'd probably win that belt. He's getting up there in age, but he's still got a lot of talent. So get in there and *wrestle*, Jimmy.

BRUCE SCHRAGIS
Casper, WY



Jimmy Snuka readies a chop for The Honky Tonk Man. Reader Bruce Schragis would like to see Snuka forget about Honky Tonk and go after the Intercontinental title.



Chris Adams and Eric Embry have had some violent disagreements lately, much to the dismay of reader Roger Norman, who places part of the blame with Chris' wife, Toni.

THE EMBRY-ADAMS WAR

When Chris Adams started feuding with Eric Embry, I thought Embry couldn't have done anything worse. He should have been more respectful of Chris' feelings and the feelings of Toni Adams. Well, things didn't work out that way. Toni had to get involved and ruin everything for the friendship between Chris and Eric. Toni is a lovely woman, but she should leave wrestling to her husband.

ROGER NORMAN
Plano, TX

HORSEMEN REUNION

When Arn Anderson returned to the NWA, I was glad to see that he was willing to team with Ric Flair, even though Ric is now siding with the fans. Arn knows he'll never find another partner better than the "Nature Boy." Teaming with Ole was another good thing Arn did. The Andersons have been a great tag team in the past. Now they're proving their greatness again.

The only thing missing is a fourth Horseman. Whoever Ric, Arn, and Ole choose as their partner, you can bet the Horsemen will soon be the most dominant force in the NWA once

again. They'll control all the titles just like they did two years ago.

WANDA JILSON
South Bend, IN

KOKINUT

When is somebody going to control Kokina Maximus? Even for a Samoan, he's too wild for wrestling. You can't tell me that Sheik Adnan Al-Kaissie can control him. He's simply one of the wildest men ever, in my opinion surpassing even Abdullah the Butcher and Bruiser Brody.

If Kokina stays around any longer, he's going to cause big problems for AWA officials, who will probably have to ban him. We don't need this kind of person in this sport!

GERALDINE NARDO
Zanesville, OH

THE IRON MEN

With their victory in the Iron Team tournament at Starrcade '89, The Road Warriors have proven that they're far from through. The Skyscrapers may think they have the Warriors' number, but they're just whistling in the dark, as the story "Road Warriors vs. Sky-

(Continued on page 46)

EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK

Stu
Saks

Editor-in-Chief

If there's a theme to this edition of Inside Wrestling, it's that wrestling is a sport of change.

Starrcade '89 was a far different affair than the Starrcades of years past. The tournament setup, a good idea, nevertheless made title matches impossible. Starrcade, once as much a part of Thanksgiving as turkey and stuffing, is now held in December.

More change is reflected in the story entitled, "Lost In The Shuffle 1990: Five WWF Stars Who Face Oblivion." Randy Savage is one of those stars, and it's almost mind-boggling to see how Savage's fortunes have fallen in the federation that has brought him his greatest fame.

In Bob Smith's feature on Dustin Rhodes, there's a subtle call for change that has not yet occurred: In order to truly become his own man, Dustin must change his ways and stop emulating his famous father.

The Ultimate Warrior may find himself changing, too: for the worse. A turn to rulebreaking may be the only way Warrior can get the title shot with Hulk Hogan he so sorely covets.

And in "One On One," Jerry Lawler and Kerry Von Erich go at it in a way they wouldn't have even considered a year ago; both men have changed a lot in the past 12 months, particularly Lawler.

Many of the columns in this issue of Inside Wrestling talk of change as well, looking ahead to the decade of the 1990s with various levels of hope and trepidation.

I look ahead to the new decade with a great deal of hope and anticipation. Because at its heart, the sport of wrestling is made up of its fans. And at no time in history have wrestling fans been more informed or involved in the affairs of the mat.

That can only mean good news for wrestling in the '90s—and beyond.

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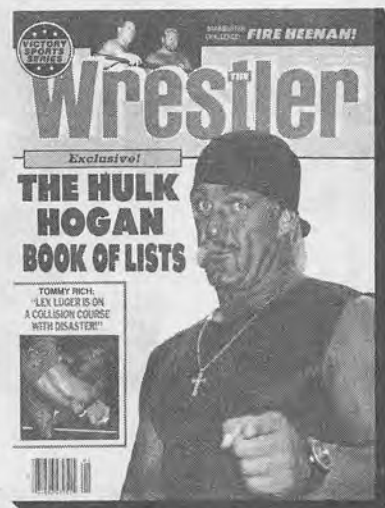
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TOP SECRET

Behind the Dressing Room Door

by David Rosenbaum

THE FANS AT The Omni went home satisfied. Make no mistake about that. Starrcade '89 was as thrill-packed and satisfying as any other Starrcade.

But, strangely, there was one common comment sounded by the fans as they exited the arena: It was a great card, but it didn't *feel* like Starrcade.

Thus, as we usher in the 1990s, we also usher in a new era of supercards. The old Starrcade format with a World title main event, several title matches on the undercard, and a host of grudge wars, is a thing of the past. Say it's sad. In reality, it's a step forward.

"This was my toughest Starrcade ever," said NWA World champion Ric Flair, who's been in every one of them back to 1983. "Instead of wrestling one tough opponent, I had to wrestle three. And instead of one tough match, I had to wrestle three. Yeah, the matches were shorter, but you go all-out all the way in a 15-minute match while you might pace yourself better in a one-hour match."

So, fans got to see Flair, Sting, Lex Luger, and The Road Warriors three times. What a bonus! But you can trace the Iron Man and Iron Team competition formats back to the oversaturation of the wrestling pay-per-view market.

In 1989, fans paid as much as \$19.95 a pop to watch Flair vs. Rick Steamboat (two times), Flair vs. Terry Funk (once), and Hulk Hogan vs. Randy Savage. Flair vs. Luger or The Great Muta at Starrcade '89 wouldn't have been anything special. And Starrcade has to be special.

"The federation is under new ownership, but we respect tradition," said NWA Vice President

(Continued on page 50)

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#1 GREAT AMERICAN BASH '88

The Price For Freedom

Controversy reigned supreme during the annual summer Bash tour as Ric Flair and Lex Luger went at it in Baltimore. Also: Rhodes vs. Windham for U.S. title; triple-cage "Tower of Doom" featuring Russian Assassin I, Ivan Koloff, Perez, Rotundo, & Sullivan vs. Road Warriors, Garvins, & Williams; Fantastics vs. Midnight; Blanchard & Anderson vs. Nikita Koloff & Sting.

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#2 GREAT AMERICAN BASH '89

The Glory Days

Revenge was the theme of the 1989 Bash as NWA champ Ric Flair came back from a broken neck to wrestle former champ Terry Funk, and U.S. champ Lex Luger battled Rick Steamboat. Also: Sting vs. Muta; War Games; a battle of wits turns to a battle of fists as Paul E. Dangerously rumbles with Jim Cornette; plus much more.

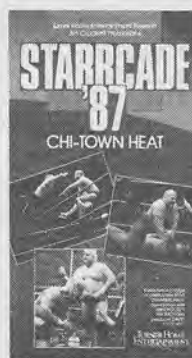
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#3 WRESTLE WAR '89

Music City Showdown

Ric Flair's courageous effort in regaining the NWA belt from Rick Steamboat on May 7, 1989, in Nashville was voted Match of the Year—some called it the Match of the Decade! Also on this memorable card, Lex Luger battles Michael Hayes; Road Warriors clash with Mike Rotundo & Steve Williams; and more.

\$39.95/125 Min./Turner Home Entertainment



#7 STARRCADE '87

Chi-Town Heat

The hottest Thanksgiving Day in Windy City history! CAGE MATCH THRILLERS: Ric Flair challenges NWA champ Ronnie Garvin;

Dusty Rhodes takes on U.S. champ Lex Luger. PLUS: Road Warriors vs. Blanchard & Anderson; Koloff vs. Taylor; Rock 'n' Rolls vs. Midnight on a scaffold; Williams vs. Windham; Garvin, Hayes, & Sting vs. Gilbert, Zbyszko, & Steiner.

\$39.95/126 Min./Turner Home Entertainment

#8 STARRCADE '86

The Sky-Walkers

So big it had to be held in two locations—The Omni in Atlanta and the Greensboro Coliseum in North Carolina. Highlights include: NWA champ Ric Flair vs. Nikita Koloff; Road Warriors vs. Midnight on a scaffold; "First Blood" match—Rhodes vs. Blanchard; Ron Garvin vs. Big (Bossman) Bubba; Rock 'n' Rolls vs. Andersons in cage; Jones vs. Valiant—hair vs. hair.

\$39.95/90 Min./Turner Home Entertainment

#9 STARRCADE '88

True Gritt

The sixth annual Starrcade event, the first under the Ted Turner banner, thrilled a sellout crowd at The Scope in Virginia. Featured: Lex Luger's challenge of Ric Flair; Road Warriors vs. Sting & Rhodes; Windham vs. Bigelow; Rotundo vs. Rick Steiner; Midnight vs. Midnight; and more.

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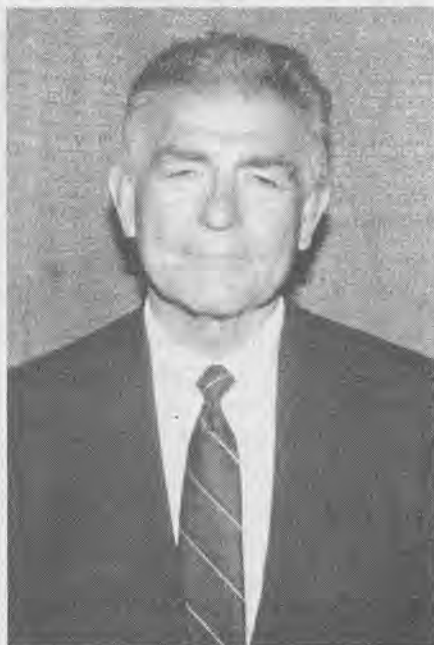
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THANK GOODNESS FOR telephones, videotapes, and fax machines. Not to mention conference calls, overnight mail delivery, and answering machines. Because a decade ago, I wouldn't have been able to write this column until I'd spent a frigid week just before the New Year's holiday in the frigid airports of Minneapolis and Chicago, driving frigid rent-a-cars with faulty heating systems down frigid roads in one of the most frigid areas of the country.

This cold snap is getting to me.

Anyway, I managed to avoid the sub-zero climes where AWA President Joe Blanchard now makes his home and conducted my interview from the relative warmth of a New York metropolitan area caught in the grip of high



Joe Blanchard

temperatures in the teens.

"What's the matter, Peters, a little bracing air got you down?" Blanchard asked with a sly chuckle. I replied that it must be difficult for a Texan to make the adjustment to such cold weather. "Hey, Craig, you know me. And you know Texans. And if you know Texans, you know

that there ain't *nothing* we can't do—even put up with a little chilly air once in a while."

Chilly? Wind-chill factors of 30 below zero isn't exactly "chilly" to me.

"So, Craig, what's on your mind besides the weather?"

I told Blanchard that I wanted to discuss the AWA Team Challenge Series. A lot of fans and insiders have hailed the Team Challenge Series as the freshest innovation the sport has seen in years. Others have said it's a ridiculous concept.

Now that the Series has been underway for a few months, we find that—as usual—the truth lies somewhere in between.

The biggest controversy about the Series thus far hasn't been the fact that Sgt. Slaughter and Col. DeBeers are on the same team (though such a pairing of enemies has made for some interesting verbal *tete-a-tetes*), or the fact

ON THE ROAD

with
CRAIG PETERS

that trades seem to be made between teams and little news about those trades is released from AWA offices (and what about a trade's effect on point standings?), or the fact that one seldom sees team captains at the ring-side for their team members' bouts (what about team spirit?).

I didn't want to talk to Blanchard about any of those things.

I wanted to talk about the reasoning behind holding the matches in what the AWA has termed a "secured facility."

"It's a decision I made for several reasons," Blanchard began as he explained why Team Challenge Series matches are being held in a closed television studio—with no fans at all present. "In the early weeks of the Series, several matches were marred by the interference of various individuals; I don't need to go into the details of those incidents here. Suffice to say that, as AWA president, I made the decision that I would not stand for any interference marring the integrity of the Team Challenge Series in any way, shape, or form whatsoever.

"The Series was then moved into a secured facility," Blanchard continued. "We have guards posted at all entrances in order to combat potential interference. The only people allowed in the facility are the technical crew for television, the announcing team, the referee, and, of course, the competitors themselves."

But no fans.

"In a way, it's a plus for the fans . . ."

At that point I had to interrupt Blanchard. How could cutting out the fans from seeing some of the most important matches the AWA has ever sanctioned be a plus?

"Look, without the roar of the crowd, the matches take on a whole new flavor," Blanchard explained. "Fans at home can hear every grunt of pain, every breath for air, every cry from a tag team partner. And, of course, so can the opponents in the match. Which means that strategies and tactics have to be subtly changed in order to win. Some of the things you can get away with while 5,000 fans are howling you just can't do in a room where your every word is heard by everyone. You've seen the tapes, Craig, what do you think?"

I think the fans are as integral a part of wrestling as the wrestlers themselves. I think the Team Challenge Series is an interesting concept that still has some snags that ought to have been worked out by now. I think that match interference can be dealt with several ways without taking such a drastic measure.

Hold the matches in a secured facility? Lock out the fans? Like the weather, it's cold.

The fans deserve better.

I think it stinks on ice. □



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NAMES MAKING

ANDRE THE GIANT joined a select club on December 13 in Huntsville, Alabama, when he and **Haku** scored a stunning victory over **Demolition** for the WWF World tag team title.

Andre is one of only three men in history to win both the WWF World heavyweight and tag team titles. The others are **Bob Backlund** and **Pedro Morales**, who turned the trick as



ANDRE AND HAKU

teammates in 1980. Morales, in fact, is the only man to hold the World heavyweight, tag team, and Intercontinental titles. But Andre's accomplishment was more than spectacular . . . it was amazing!

Manager **Bobby Heenan's** decision to bring Andre and Haku together looks like the work of genius, but it was actually an act of desperation. Andre's 20-year career was coming to a crushing close as he suffered loss after loss to Intercontinental champ **The Ultimate Warrior**. Andre's

greatest moment of glory—when he beat **Hulk Hogan** for the World title on February 5, 1988—was cut short after about two minutes when he gave the belt to **Ted DiBiase**. Since then, he's become increasingly slow and ineffective—and easy prey for the Warrior.

Haku, too, had a tough 1989. Once known as King Haku, he lost his "crown" to **Hacksaw Duggan** and couldn't get it back. His attempt to win the World title was stopped short when he failed miserably in a series of matches against Hogan; no rematches were in his future. Heenan had two choices with Andre and Haku: let their slide continue, or bring them together and hope that the whole was greater than the sum of its parts. It was.

The win over Demolition ended **Ax** and **Smash's** second World title reign at two months and 11 days. It was Haku's first world title of any kind.

In other WWF news, Hogan signed for a February series of handicap



DEMOLITION

matches against **Curt Hennig** and **Lanny Poffo**. Hennig has been no match for Hogan in their one-on-one battles . . . **Ivan Koloff** and **Paul Jones** are opening a wrestling school at the Metroliner Fitness Center in Stallings, North Carolina. The telephone number is 704-553-0698 . . . **Nord the Barbarian** is now calling himself "**Big Yukon**" **John Nord**. Nord spent some time by himself in the Yukon and decided he didn't like the way he was . . . **Jerry Lawler**,



JERRY LAWLER

who holds the USWA and Texas titles, planned to wrestle both **Bill Dundee** and **King Cobra** in the same night. Lawler told Cobra that he cannot call himself "King." Chalk up another enemy for Lawler, who rarely hears a cheer anymore.

Lex Luger thought he had won the NWA World title from **Ric Flair** on December 26 in Knoxville, Tennessee, but this time the referee was smart to his cheating ways. An exciting, brutal match at the Civic Center appeared to be over when Luger placed his feet on the ropes for leverage and pinned Flair. The referee, however, disallowed the pin. As Luger argued, Flair snuck up

N' NEWS

Bill Apter
reporting...

from behind and got the three-count.

"Luger's gotta be kidding," Flair said. "If he thinks that stuff is gonna wash, he's in bigger trouble than I thought. Listen, he's already tried that with me a few times, and every time the ref knows what's going on. I think Luger oughta stop trying to cheat his way into a win and instead find a real way to beat me."

But Flair was severely punished in this match; he bled profusely from the forehead after getting rammed into the guard rail and turnbuckles, and was caught in a Luger bearhug for several crunching minutes. Luger is the younger wrestler, and if Flair doesn't come up with a more adequate defense, the "Total Package" may not have to cheat to win.

Wayne Bloom and **Mike Enos**—**The Destruction Crew**—face a serious challenge for their AWA World tag team belts from the newly formed team of **Paul Diamond** and **The**

Trooper. Diamond and Trooper appeared to have won the belts when Diamond pinned Enos. But after a videotape review, it was ruled that Bloom was the legal man in the ring. A steel cage rematch was immediately signed.

"We'll go along with the decision because it's only a matter of time until Bloom and Enos are history," Diamond said. "Pinning Enos was a snap. The Destruction Crew is the most overrated team I've ever seen."

Eddie Gilbert suffered a injured right rotator cuff and a severely sprained right ankle during a match with **Kevin Sullivan** at Cobo Arena in



EDDIE GILBERT

Detroit . . . The first-ever pro wrestling card in Peking, China, is scheduled for February. Promoted by the New Japan federation, the card will feature **Antonio Inoki** and stars from the U.S., Japan, U.S.S.R, and China . . . **Leo Burke** scored a stunning upset victory over **Carlos Colon** for the WWC Uni-

versal title . . . **The Soutaker** is now in **Boss Winters'** camp. Winters beat **Nate the Rat** on Christmas Day in Nashville, Tennessee, to win the contract. Soutaker is conducting a reign of terror over his CWA foes.

Haystacks Calhoun, the beloved, legendary grappler, died on December 7 in Texas at the age of 55. Calhoun,

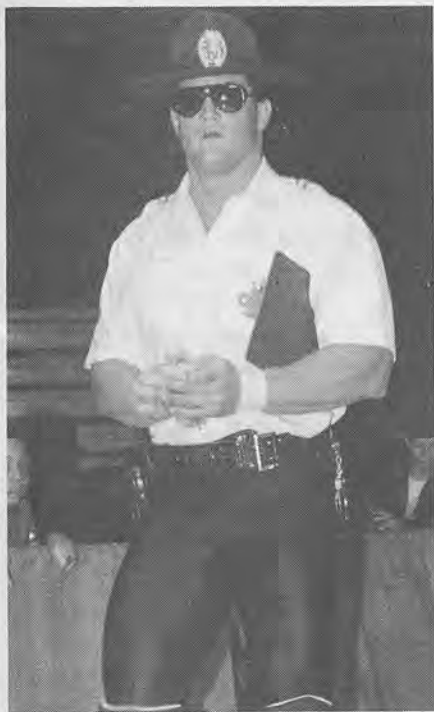


HAYSTACKS CALHOUN

who was born in Morgan's Corner, Arkansas, in 1934, weighed well over 600 pounds for most of his career and was virtually unbeatable. He had been fighting diabetes for several years at the time of his death.

Jerry Bryant, the former CWA star who valiantly battled Lou Gehrig's disease for two years, died on December 23 at his home in Memphis. He was 35 years old. He is survived by his wife, Judy, and four children.

That's all for now, fans. See you at the matches. □



THE TROOPER

THE

INSIDER

By Eddie Ellner

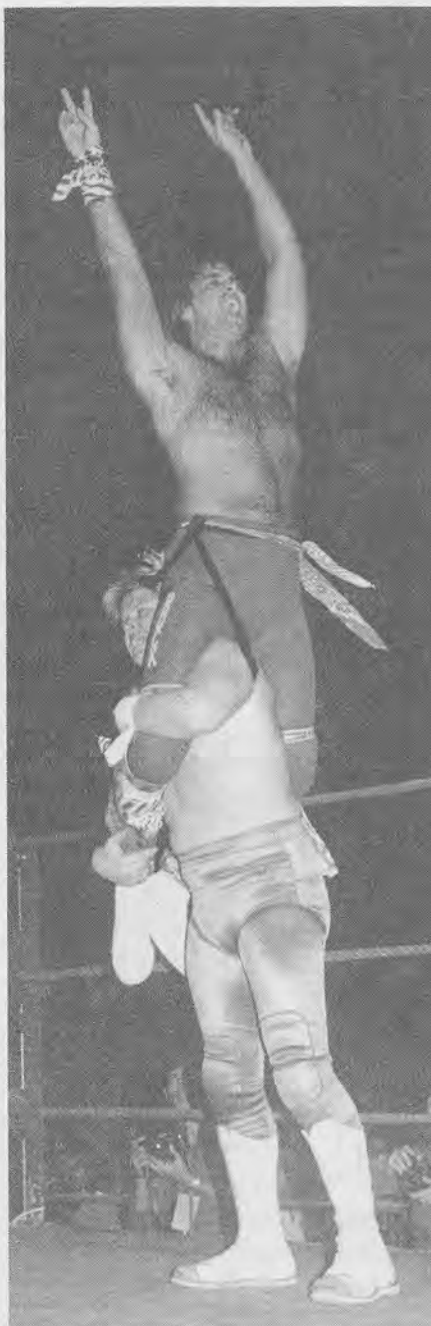
[The opinions expressed in "The Insider" are those of Eddie Ellner alone, and do not necessarily represent the opinions of anyone else on the staff of this magazine.]

AS THIS COLUMN is being written, the white-haired creaking old decade of the '80s is still with us—for a few more days, anyway. A new year is an opportunity to look back and reflect on events that have passed, as well as a chance to look ahead and consider a dozen months fat with promise and possibility.

But January 1, 1990, opens the door not only on a new year, but a new decade. As such, the possibilities for the future seem endless. Unfortunately, the realities of the present make those possibilities appear something less than optimistic.

Take Zeus, for example. Is there anyone with a sane mind who believed that this comic pretender would still be around come the new year? How many times does a limited sap like Hulk Hogan have to hold his shoulders to the mat for the truth to sink in: The closest Zeus belongs to a wrestling ring is as a ringside spectator.

Or The Rock 'n' Roll Express. Good God, they're returning to the NWA to infect yet another generation of addle-brained teenybopper mall rats whose brains have already been turned to tapi-



Bobby Eaton can't control Robert Gibson. In Eddie Ellner's opinion, Gibson and Rick Morton are too old to call themselves The Rock 'n' Roll Express.

oca by overdosing on Debbie Gibson and Tiffany records. The only bright side to their return is that The Midnight Express, fresh off a brilliant thrashing of The Dynamic Dudes (nobody with two cents' worth of brains ever thought the Express' courting of the fans was for real, anyway), is revitalized and ready to send Ricky and Robert back into obscurity, where they belong. By the way, aren't Morton and Gibson getting a little old for this rock 'n' roll thing? It's embarrassing.

Speaking of the NWA, I'm troubled by the apparent reformation of The Four Horsemen. Ric Flair is Ric Flair, and the song remains the same; only his feud with the vilified Lex Luger and a tenuous friendship with Sting has made him a favorite in the eyes of the fans. But Ole and Arn Anderson? Arn without Tully Blanchard is settling for second best, and Ole's best years—good as they were—are long past. Can Ole and Arn manage to wrangle their way to the NWA World tag team title? Is Flair losing his grasp on the World heavyweight title? Sting as the ad hoc fourth Horseman? I fear that the days of "Four Horsemen, four belts" will never be with us again.

As long as I'm still in an NWA frame of mind, something *has* to be said about The Great Muta's poor showing at the Iron Man competition at Starrcade '89. Inex-

(Continued on page 52)

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A—ON— ASSIGNMENT

BY LIZ HUNTER

THE GLORY DAYS for Rick Martel came just before the mid-1980s, when Martel was not only sublimely handsome, but either the AWA World champion or top contender to that throne. Those were the days when a hard-nosed man by the name of Stan Hansen had his hands full with Martel, a man he summarily dismissed as "a pretty boy."

If you were a real fan, it was hard not to like either of them. They stood for everything that was right about wrestling; each had separate attributes that came together in the ring to form a delicious whole. A Stan Hansen vs. Rick Martel match was like a perfect introduction to wrestling. Show a newcomer the match and you'd have them hooked forever.

"Liz, honey," Rick once said to me during a quiet moment over a glass of wine in a quaint cafe near the St. Paul Civic Center. "I may not *like* Hansen, but I sure *respect* him. I like myself, but if there's such a thing as afterlife and I can't come back as myself, turn me into Stan Hansen."

He caught me breathless. I felt a quick jolt of excitement and had to remind myself of my duties as a reporter. That night—it was around the summer of 1985, more than a year into Martel's 19½-month title reign—I became a Martel fan forever.

Or so I thought. The Rick Martel we're seeing now is nothing like the man I sat with on that balmy August night. Hard to be-



"The Model" Rick Martel is a far cry from the handsome, scientific grappler who captured the AWA World title in 1984, Liz Hunter writes.

lieve, but he's even worse than the man who turned against his Strike Force partner, Tito Santana, at WrestleMania V. He's a product of Rick Martel, bitter man, and Vince McMahon, the promoter that turns personalities into dollars.

As much as I hate to say it, the Martel we're seeing now wouldn't stand a chance against Hansen. In fact, he wouldn't stand a chance against the old Rick Martel.

"Somebody oughta take his 'Model' bit and shove it where the sun don't shine," Hansen said recently when I reached him in Tokyo. "He used to have a lot of guts, but I think he was drained when I clamped on that Boston

crab. Sapped him of whatever guts he had left."

In fact, that really wasn't the case. Martel submitted to the Boston crab and lost the AWA belt to Hansen, but it was a wonder he could wrestle at all. Martel wasn't 100 percent that night at the Byrne Meadowlands Arena in New Jersey, and showed a lot of guts just by stepping in the ring.

During the years that followed—a move to the WWF came shortly thereafter—Martel formed an outstanding tag team with a young up-and-comer named Tom Zenk. Then things started to sour. Zenk left the team, claiming that Martel was hogging the spotlight. Zenk was

(Continued on page 54)

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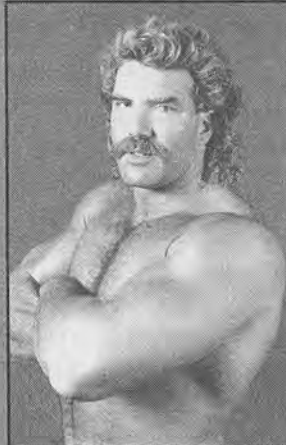
Do you have a favorite wrestler who has left your area? Are you wondering where he is today? Then this special column is just for you. Each month we will update the whereabouts of four current or former wrestlers



BOB ORTON SR.

The "Big O" is now retired and living a comfortable life away from the ring. He resides in two spacious homes, one in Kansas City, Kansas, and the other in Las Vegas. The rugged Orton—who, like his famous son, "Cowboy" Bob

Orton Jr., was a rulebreaker—now claims that he likes to dabble in the stock market. "I always was a gambler," says the former co-holder of the Florida tag team title. "The market is the best place to show how good I am."



SCOTT HALL

The former AWA World tag team champion (with Curt Hennig) entered the NWA last spring, but left the federation only a few months afterward. Today, Hall is competing in Austria against such top European stars as Otto

Wanz, Salvatore Bellomo, and Big Van Vader. He also has his sights set on making a return to the United States very soon. "This European excursion has been a terrific experience for me," Hall reported.



DUKE KEOMUKA

"The Duke" made his mark in wrestling in the mid-'50s when he became the Texas champion, and was unique because he would take on either fan favorites or rulebreakers. His legendary feud with Fritz Von Erich is still consid-

ered one of the greatest ever in the Lone Star State. Duke resigned from his post as a talent agent for the FCW last year. He is now retired and living in Las Vegas. He asked us to send his best to all his fans.



MAX PAIN

Pain, a massive 6'6", 350-pound rulebreaker, shocked the wrestling world by winning the CWA title in 1988, his rookie year. He was so impressive that he was named second runner-up by the fans in that year's *PWI* Rookie of the

Year voting. Currently, Pain is a wrestler and assistant promoter (along with Dash Riprock) for the new Western Wrestling Alliance in Utah. He has also been engaged in a violent feud with "Overlord" Shawn Roberts.

INSIDE WRESTLING

165

CAPSULE PROFILE

AS A YOUNGSTER, Rick Martel dreamed of playing hockey in the National Hockey League (*"Every Canadian boy knows hockey"*) ... Made his professional wrestling debut in 1972 at the age of 16 (*"So young, so talented"*) ... Won singles and tag team titles in Georgia, Hawaii, Australia, and New Zealand (*"Versatility was the key"*) ... With native New Zealander Tony Garea, won the WWF tag title from The Samoans in November 1980 (*"Those jungle boys never knew what hit them"*) ... Enjoyed a second title reign with Garea from July to October 1981 (*"Maybe the most popular tag team of its time"*) ... Journeyed to the AWA, where a non-title victory over World champion Nick Bockwinkel made him the number-one contender (*"Bockwinkel was ripe for the taking"*) ... Voted "Wrestling's Sexiest Superstar" in 1982 by the readers of *Wrestling Superstars* magazine (*"Do you have to ask why?"*) ... Dropped out of title contention after a year of wrestling Bockwinkel (*"He cheated in every match"*) ... In Montreal, teamed with Dino Bravo to capture the Canadian tag team championship (*"Dino was always a good egg"*) ... Returned to the AWA and again wrestled his way to the number-one contender's spot (*"Tenacity pays off"*) ... On May 13, 1984, in St. Paul, Minnesota, de-

RICK MARTEL

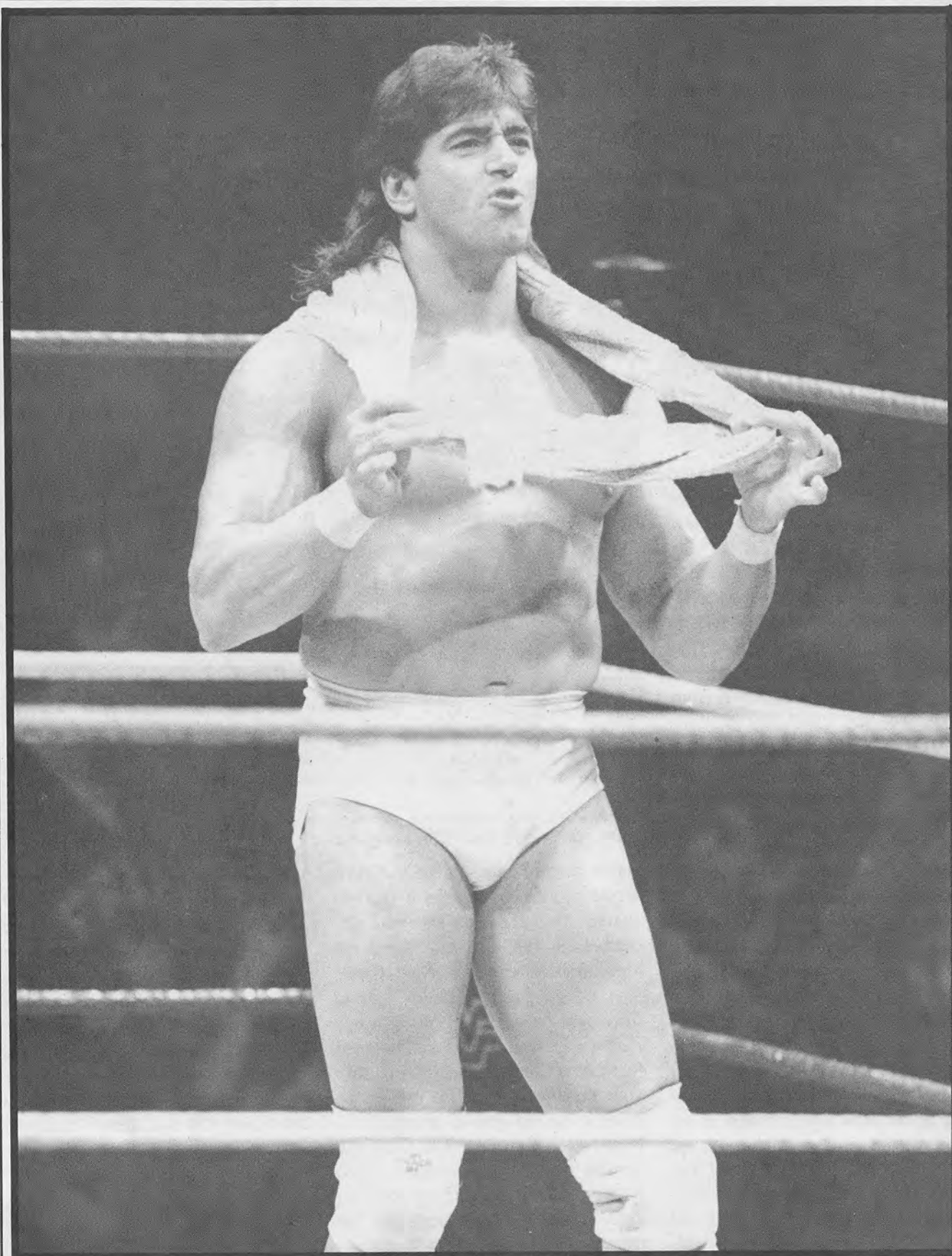


Rick Martel sits on Tito Santana and uses the ropes for extra pressure. As Strike Force, Martel and Santana were WWF tag team champions. Now Martel has turned rulebreaker.

feated Jumbo Tsuruta to win the AWA World title (*"Few victories have been sweeter"*) ... Held the belt until December 29, 1985, when, at the Byrne Meadowlands Arena in New Jersey, Stan Hansen used a Boston crab to force him to submit (*"Still, it was a long and glorious reign"*) ... Returned to Montreal and started training with Tom Zenk, whom he had met in the AWA (*"The kid showed promise"*) ... In early 1987, they came to the WWF as The Can-Am Connection (*"Could have been the next champions"*) ... Zenk walked out on Martel after the team failed to win the belts despite repeated shots at the champions, The Hart Foundation (*"The man was a stinking quitter!"*) ... Found another

partner in Tito Santana and called themselves Strike Force (*"The perfect name"*) ... On October 27, 1987, in Syracuse, New York, Strike Force won the belts from the Harts (*"An inevitable victory"*) ... Lost the title to Demolition at WrestleMania IV on March 27, 1988 (*"Santana didn't execute properly"*) ... Was out of action for several months after being injured by Demolition (*"It was almost curtains"*) ... Turned against Santana at WrestleMania V (*"He had it coming to him"*) ... As a rulebreaker, signed with Slick and started calling himself "The Model" (*"The best—and the best-looking"*) ... Currently feuding with Brutus Beefcake (*"All he can do is cut hair, and he does that poorly"*) □

CAPSULE PROFILE PINUP



RICK MARTEL

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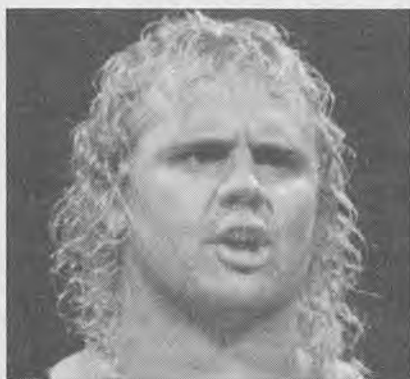
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ST. PAUL, MN By Jason Biagi



**HULK HOGAN
vs.
CURT HENNIG**



"The Genius" Lanny Poffo was in Hennig's corner for this classic battle of power vs. speed. Late in the match, "Mr. Perfect" took charge and shocked the crowd by perfectplexing Hogan. The champion broke out of the follow-up pin attempt and started to ravage Hennig. Hulk threw him out of the ring, beat him brutally, then threw him back in. But then Poffo choked Hogan with his reading slate, causing the champion to be counted out.

OTHER BOUTS: Jake Roberts beat Ted DiBiase by DQ ... Ronnie Garvin pinned Greg Valentine ... The Powers of Pain defeated The Bushwhackers ... Dino Bravo pinned Jimmy Snuka ... Rick Martel pinned Brutus Beefcake ... Lanny Poffo pinned Mark Young ... Tugboat defeated Barry Horowitz.

MEMPHIS, TN By Kimberly Hunt



**RIC FLAIR
vs.
THE GREAT MUTA**



Flair took control of the match by using chops, punches, and headlocks. Muta reversed the tempo and attempted to put Flair away with an array of submission holds. Muta attempted a moonsault, but Flair rolled out of the way. As Flair was about to clamp on the figure-four leglock, Lex Luger rushed to the ring, causing Muta's disqualification. Soon Sting entered the fray. The fan favorites got the better of the brawl, sending Luger and Muta scurrying to the dressing room.

OTHER BOUTS: Kevin Sullivan defeated Brad Anderson ... Mike Rotundo beat Norman the Lunatic ... Tom Zenk beat Jim Garvin ... The Midnight Express beat The Dynamic Dudes ... Road Warrior Hawk defeated Dan Spivey ... Lex Luger defeated Sting by DQ ... The Steiners defeated Doom.

MILWAUKEE, WI By Erick Hofacker



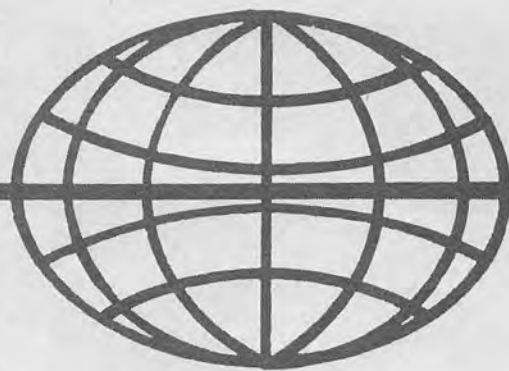
**RONNIE GARVIN
vs.
GREG VALENTINE**



In this grudge match, both competitors exchanged hard chops and slaps. Garvin attempted to apply a scorpion leglock, but Valentine raked his eyes. Valentine put the figure-four leglock on Garvin and held it for two minutes, until Garvin reached the ropes. Later, Garvin ripped Valentine's shinguard off, but when Garvin turned his back, Valentine snuck up on him and rolled him up for the pin as he held his thighs.

OTHER BOUTS: Jake Roberts beat Ted DiBiase by DQ ... Tugboat thrashed Barry Horowitz ... The Rockers defeated Jacques & Raymond Rougeau ... Bad News Brown pinned Jim Brunzell ... Hercules downed The Conquistador ... The Ultimate Warrior defeated Andre the Giant by DQ.

WRESTLING CAPITALS



PRINCE GEORGE, BC By Faron Muncey



**LARRY CAMERON
vs.
OWEN HART**



After Hart missed with a shoulderblock, Cameron took control, hitting his smaller opponent with one devastating clothesline after another. As Cameron tried to throw him against the ropes, Owen leaped onto the top rope and executed an amazing backflip. When Cameron bailed out of the ring, Hart leaped through the ropes with a flying bodypress that almost injured one ringside fan. They battled outside the ring with chairs and tables until they were both disqualified.

OTHER BOUTS: Beef Wellington pinned Skull Mason ... Bob Emory beat Jason Anderson ... Chris Benoit drew with Johnny Smith ... The Archangel defeated Conan the Great ... Great Gama defeated Bruce Hart by DQ.

PALMETTO, FL By Ed Jones



**JERRY LAWLER
vs.
JUNKYARD DOG**



For this match, Lawler was being managed by Paul E. Dangerously. Late in the match, JYD had Lawler caught in a sleeper. Dangerously handed Lawler a pair of brass knuckles. Lawler took a swing at JYD and mistakenly knocked out referee Sal Corrente. After JYD got Lawler in a sleeper again and covered him for the pin, the substitute referee made the three-count. However, Corrente recovered and disqualified Lawler for hitting him with the brass knuckles.

OTHER BOUTS: Tommy Rogers & Bobby Fulton defeated Dennis Condrey & Doug Gilbert ... Steve Keirn beat Ron Slinker ... Kendall Windham defeated Mike Graham by countout ... Rock Hard Rick defeated Mike Awesome.

NEW YORK, NY By Ryan Cannata



**RANDY SAVAGE
vs.
HACKSAW DUGGAN**



This match for Savage's "crown" had two referees. Midway through the bout, Duggan took control from the "Macho Man," but Sensational Sherri jumped up on the apron, distracting both refs. Savage crawled over to grab Sherri's purse, but Elizabeth ran out, took the purse, and threw it to Duggan. Hacksaw hit Savage with it, causing him to tumble out of the ring and get counted out.

OTHER BOUTS: Haku pinned Paul Roma ... The Hart Foundation drew with The Rockers ... Al Perez beat Steve Lombardi ... Jake Roberts beat Ted DiBiase by DQ ... Tito Santana and Bad News Brown were both counted out ... Dino Bravo defeated Hercules.



Matt Brock's PLAIN SPEAKING

ATLANTA, GA: Starrcade is no longer held on Thanksgiving Day. The WWF took care of that with the Survivor Series three years ago, so if you're a stickler for tradition, I guess Starrcade has lost some. Then again, the Detroit Lions play football every Thanksgiving, so tradition isn't always something to get excited about. This year, they could have held the Survivor Series any day they wanted and it wouldn't have matched up to Starrcade '89, one of the best shows of this or any other year. The reason: Starrcade '89 was wrestling and nothing but wrestling. No cheap gimmicks, no women's matches, no cages, no whips, chains, chairs, or anything else. Just the four best individual wrestlers and the four best tag teams in the NWA in nearly three hours of no-holds-

barred action. *This* was wrestling like it oughta be, and even in a year already saturated by pay-per-view cards—sometimes it seems as if there's a "supercard" every other week—this was something special. No titles on the line. Nothing to lose except your reputation and your guts. This was the kind of night that tested the man inside the man. Because of that, I was surprised that Sting won the Iron Man competition. I didn't think The Great Muta stood a chance—he finished last—but I figured first prize to be a two-way battle between Lex Luger and Ric Flair. As it turned out, the key match of the night was Luger and Flair going to a time-limit draw (each bout had a 15-minute time limit). Each got five points for that, but if Luger or Flair had won—even by countout—they would've had enough points to distance themselves from Sting, who already lost to Luger but had pinned Muta. It came down to the final match: Sting had to pin Flair or Flair had to pin Sting; if it went to a draw, Luger was the winner. With one minute left, a draw looked like the best bet. Twenty seconds left, Flair starts to apply the figure-four, and again it looks like it's all Luger. Then, somehow, Sting grabs Flair's neck, rolls him up, and scores the most shocking pin of the year. The Iron Team competition came down to the last match, too, but this was no surprise. The Road Warriors won by virtue of their pin of The Samoans. The surprise, however, came earlier in the evening when Rick and Scott Steiner beat the Legion of Doom by pinfall. Truthfully, I didn't think that could possibly happen. Unfortunately for the Steiners, their fate was sealed a few matches later when they lost by disqualification to The Samoans. As I said, it took guts, skill, tenacity, and a little bit of luck to make it through this night. And if there's an Iron Man/Iron Team tournament at Starrcade '90, I'm there. You should be there, too.



STING VS. RIC FLAIR

NASHVILLE, TN: This was one night before Starrcade, and just to give you an idea of where the WWF stands in comparison to the NWA (we're talking about match quality, not TV production and bucks), the main event pitting

Harder than nails, veteran wrestling reporter Matt Brock has logged more miles covering wrestling than any other journalist. Every month Matt will travel to the sport's hotbeds, reporting everything he sees without fear or favor

Randy Savage and Zeus against Hulk Hogan and Brutus Beefcake in a steel cage was taped—*taped!*—for the WWF's December 27 pay-per-view show. A snoozer. Hogan showed plenty of guts but Beefcake cheated. Sensational Sherri shouldn't be allowed within 10 miles of a wrestling ring. Neither should Zeus. If this guy's a wrestler, I'm Ernest Hemingway. The fact of the matter is that Zeus gets into the ring and does two things: stare (he barely does *that* right) and choke. He can't talk, he can't act, he's already shown that he can't back up his words, and only Vince McMahon Jr.'s desire to squeeze a profit out of *No Holds Barred* is keeping him in the ring. McMahon can do what he likes with his money, but I wish he'd stop trying to destroy my sport. By the way, the whispers are growing louder: Hogan vs. Zeus at WrestleMania VI. Thesz help us all.

NEW YORK, NY: Brock 1, cholesterol 0. Visited the doctor today and the results were all in my favor. Looks like your veteran reporter has won the battle, but the war is still to be fought. "Mr. Brock, you've turned your life around," the doc said. "Now, if you can keep this up, it could put years onto your life and make you a healthier man." The cholesterol level is down to 185. If I stay away from alcohol and red meat, it'll probably drop even lower. "That reduces the chances of you having a heart attack," the doctor added, but he didn't have to convince me. Yeah, it's tough not being able to go out for a drink with the boys after a match, but there's always seltzer. And a big, 16-ounce porterhouse looks awfully good, especially at that place down the block from the Baltimore Arena, but I have a new goal in life: I'm going to outlive Apter.

PORTLAND, OR: Rosenbaum dragged me out here and he'll be begging for forgiveness for a long time. Scotty the Body, who holds the Pacific Northwest title, was supposed to get married to his former valet, Ginger. Naturally, it never came off, since Ginger is now on the other side and Scotty has a new valet named Veronica. But—surprise, surprise!—Scotty left Ginger at the altar, not the other way around. She was out there ready to tie the knot when Scotty started calling her names. Rosenbaum watched in horror. I think he actually expected to see a



SCOTTY THE BODY & GINGER

wedding (he took notes). Well, I dragged him out of the arena in a real hurry and we headed right for the airport. "Think Scotty'll propose to Veronica?" he asked. "How long have you been in this business?" I asked. On the flight back, he pulled out a copy of *Opera Now*. I grabbed it out of his hands and handed him a copy of *Whatever Happened To Gorgeous George?* "Do your homework, Rosenbaum," I said. "Now let me write my column in peace." □

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WHY DUSTIN RHODES

MUST ABANDON HIS AMERICAN DREAM

By Bob Smith

Dustin "The Natural" Rhodes is the prototypical chip off the old block. He looks and wrestles like his famous father, but lately he's even started to act like Dusty Rhodes! If he's ever going to establish himself as a superstar, this young man must stand on his own

"I'M FUNKY LIKE a monkey and ready to rock 'n' roll," said the young Texan. "The 'Dream' is here, and ain't nothin' gonna stop me now. I'm the man of the hour, the man with the power, too sweet to be sour, daddy. And I ain't stoppin' till I run all the bad rulebreakers out of Texas. *Whoo*, baby, lemme flash my million-dollar smile!"

Was that Dusty Rhodes talking? Well, almost. This is *Dustin* Rhodes, now 20 years old and making his way in the USWA and CWA totally on his own. To many observers, "The Natural" is becoming a carbon copy of his famous father, who now is one of the most popular men in the WWF.

"Ain't nothin' flatters me more than comparin' me to my daddy," said Dustin before making his USWA debut in the fall. "But he's gone on his way in the WWF now,

Photos by Buddy Myers



and it's time for me to go on mine. I gotta prove to the fans, the wrestlers, and to myself that I got what it takes to be a success. And I ain't stoppin' till I win me a title here in my home state of Texas."

Rhodes has been well on his way to doing just that, but many of the men he's been teaming with are beginning to have serious worries about him.

"All he hears are comparisons to Dusty," said current CWA champion Bill Dundee, who has teamed with Dustin in the USWA often during the past several months. "Hey, I know Dusty, too, but the way Dustin's going about his business is making him a target. Rulebreakers see him acting like his father, and it just drives them crazy. After all, who wrecked more rulebreakers' careers than Dusty?"

Indeed, Rhodes' close association with his father's image has been making him a marked man ever

since he donned the tights for the first time. Early in 1989, both Dusty and Dustin were wrestling in Florida, and many times formed a tag team. But when Dusty left the federation in the spring to go to the WWF, Dustin was left alone against many of his father's enemies. His matches against the 407-pound Big Steel Man were some of the bloodiest seen anywhere last year. Still, the rookie Rhodes survived.

"The kid was as brave as anyone I've ever seen," said Steve Keirn, the current PWF champion. "He took some terrible beatings, but he kept coming back for more every time. But the truth of the matter is that they weren't really Dustin's battles at all. He was just carrying on with Dusty's feuds after his father left the area. Dustin's a great young talent, but he's not the man his father is, at least not yet. He's going to get himself seriously hurt if he keeps this up."



Dustin Rhodes headlocks Brian Lee (left). Lee's Stud Stable partner, Robert Fuller, armlocks Rhodes (above) and belts him with a forearm smash (below). Dustin's problem is that he's fighting battles started by his famous father, Dusty.



After leaving Florida in the summer, Rhodes moved on to the CWA and the USWA, where he has had a great deal of success in both singles and tag team matches. But, as usual, Dustin's close relationship with his father has led to more problems from old Rhodes foes.

"His daddy wasn't nothin'," spit Robert Fuller, a longtime Rhodes nemesis who currently shares the USWA tag team title with Brian Lee. "His punk kid ain't nothin', either. Since he ain't got the guts to show up himself, the best way of gettin' back at his fat ol' man is to cripple his offspring. It'll be a real feather in my cap to prove to the entire Lone Star State that the whole Rhodes



Stud Stable valet Sylvia whacks Dustin with a kendo stick (top left). Dustin collars P.Y. Chu-Hi (top right). Lee leaps onto Rhodes' neck (above). Dustin is convinced he can make it without his father.

family ain't nothin' but a bunch of no-talent bums."

It's clear from Dustin's early matches in the USWA that a lot of people have the same thing in mind. From Fuller to P.Y. Chu-Hi to Jerry Lawler, Rhodes' opponents seem to be going out of their way to hurt Dustin in the most brutal ways imaginable. But even after the hardest of matches, Dustin comes back during interviews using many of the same phrases and inflections that his father does. Dustin claims he just can't help it.

"Hey, my poppa is the greatest," said Dustin proudly. "Lotta people say I'm just like him, but if I'm half



as good as that, I'd have to say I've arrived in this sport. If people can't deal with that, too bad."

Dustin, thus far, has refused to listen to his critics, but it is obvious they have a valid point. During a recent tag team match pitting Rhodes and Dundee against Fuller and Lee, both rulebreakers continuously screamed, "This one's for Dusty!" before striking Dustin. It's obvious that Dustin's predilection for bringing up Dusty's name is causing him more problems than even he cares to admit.

"That's where everything is up to Dustin," reasoned Dundee. "He's one of the most fantastic young men I've ever known, both as a person and as a wrestler. He doesn't *need* to rely on his father's memory. He should just forget about everything his father has done and concentrate on making his own image. After all, his daddy's not around anymore, is he?"

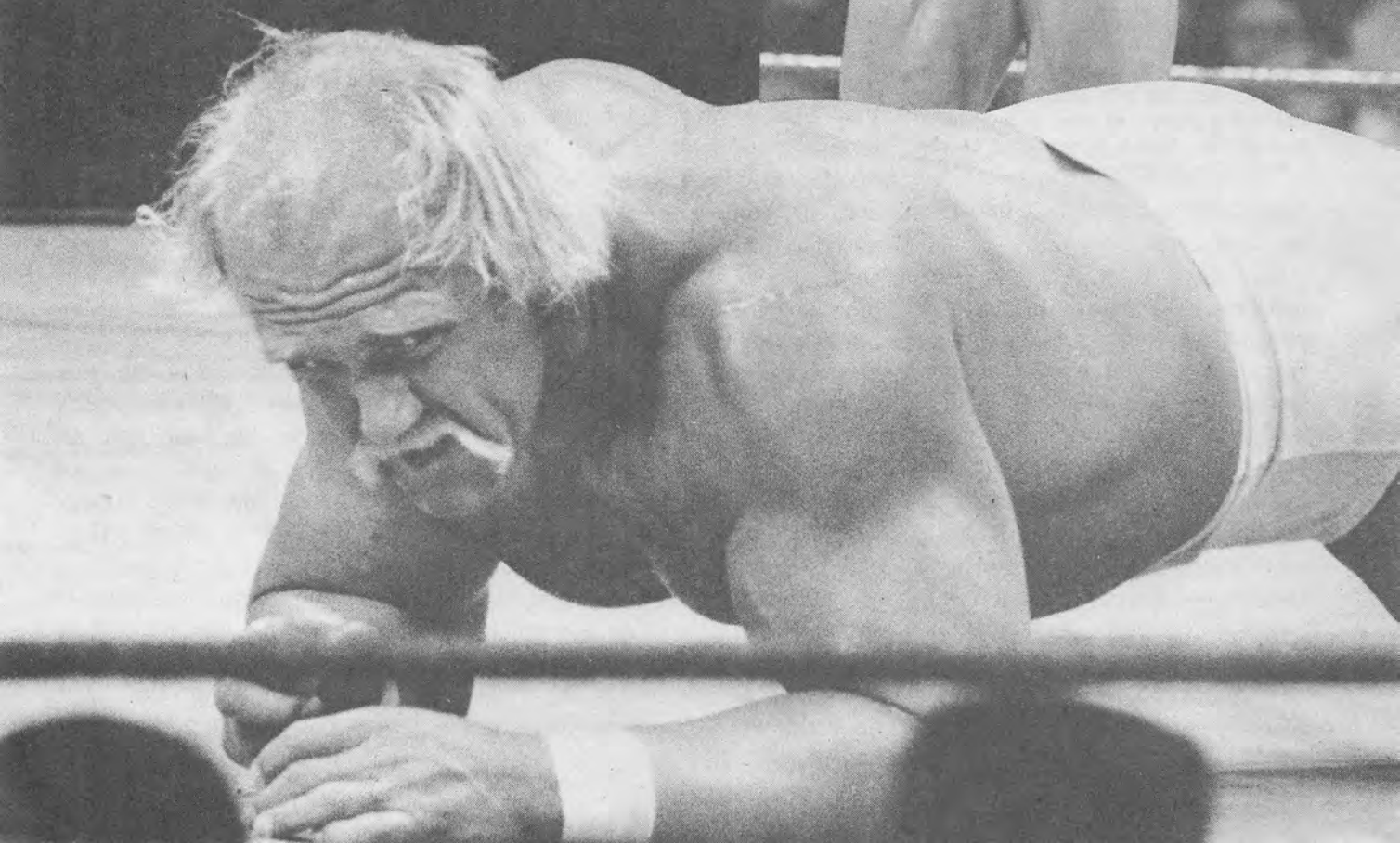
Actually, Dustin and his father are worlds apart. Dusty is now managed by a woman named Sapphire and battling Big Bossman in the WWF. After following his father through the NWA and PWF, Dustin is alone now for the first time. After a year of success in the sport, it is time for Dustin to forget the "American Dream" and establish his own identity.

"I'll be all right," insists Dustin, the runner-up finisher for *Pro Wrestling Illustrated* Rookie of the Year honors. "I know what everybody's saying, and they can keep right on talkin'. As long as I got my babies out there behind me, there's no way I'm gonna fail. Bring on the Fullers and the Lawlers. I don't need my daddy. I don't need *anybody*. It don't matter what I look like or how I sound. I'll prove that Dustin Rhodes can stand on his own against anybody. *Then* maybe I'll get the respect I deserve." □

**ULTIMATE
WARRIOR—**

HULK HOGAN OR BUST!

By Craig Peters



The Ultimate Warrior has waited for a shot at Hulk Hogan's WWF World title for too long. Finally, he's ready to take action. But even his most desperate attempts at a title match might fail to earn him what the WWF doesn't want him to have

RUMORS RUN RAMPANT in professional wrestling. Many of them turn out to be untrue, but rarely are they not based on some sort of fact. When the whispers started that WrestleMania VI might feature a showdown between Hulk Hogan and The Ultimate Warrior, there was reason to believe that the rumor originated in the WWF's main offices in Greenwich, Connecticut.

Take these factors into account and you'll understand why:

- Hogan, the WWF World champion, and Ultimate Warrior, the WWF Intercontinental champion, are both fan favorites.

- The Warrior has reached a dead end, thanks to his own dominance. He's done everything he can do as I-C champ. The World title—actually, any world title—has always been his primary goal.

- These rumors couldn't have started on their own because the Warrior and Hogan have never clashed. In fact, they've associated with one another very little since the Warrior came to the federation three years ago. One has to believe that the Warrior was at WWF offices demanding a title shot.

In all likelihood, the Warrior's request was refused. Pitting the two biggest stars in the WWF



The Ultimate Warrior flails away at Andre the Giant, whom he has beaten decisively many times (above). Curt Hennig, taking a swing at Hulk Hogan (below), has had repeated shots at the champ and has been unsuccessful in each. The Warrior is looking for his chance.



against one another would be a box-office smash in the short run, but marketing sabotage over the long haul. The fans would be forced to take sides and the WWF would be robbed of one incredibly popular, revenue-generating fan favorite.

That is the kind of bottom-line thinking that dominates the sport these days. Unfortunately, such

thinking robs us of what could be the greatest power vs. power battle in wrestling history, a match that would give both men the greatest test of their careers. It would verify Hogan as the greatest WWF World champion of all time, or send the Warrior catapulting into the '90s on a note of pure dominance.

(Continued on page 56)

★ STARRCADE '89: NIGHT



Sting rolls Ric Flair into a scorpion leglock. The "Stinger's" victory at Starrcade '89 has not automatically given him NWA World title shots.

**IRON MAN
STING PINS
RIC FLAIR—
AND LEX
LUGER
IS GETTING
TITLE
SHOTS!**

Photos & Text By Bill Apter

Under any other circumstances, Sting would have been declared the top contender for the NWA World title. But after pinning World champion Ric Flair at Starrcade '89, Sting watched while Lex Luger got the title matches!

OF THE IRON MEN!



Action from the Iron Man competition: Lex Luger executes a stomachbreaker on Sting (left), Flair sets up The Great Muta—who surprisingly scored no points—for a figure-four leglock (above), and Sting superplexes Muta (below).

THE QUESTION WAS shouted from the back of the reporters' pack. "Now that you've pinned Flair, when do expect to get your next title shot?" By the time Sting had a chance to answer it, he was being whisked away by NWA officials to another press conference, another interview, or maybe, as one reporter snidely suggested, another debriefing.

You've pinned Flair, the debriefing would begin. Now be a good man and don't rock the boat. Don't go after Flair. The rule is no fan favorite vs. fan favorite matches, and it's there for a reason. Luger's the U.S. champion, he deserves a shot at the title, and that's how it has to be.

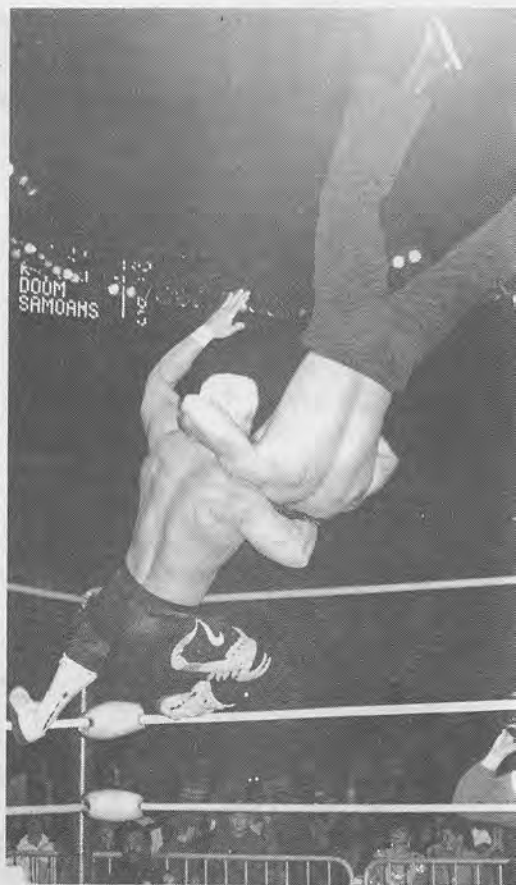
Or maybe Sting was dragged away because the officials didn't want him to give an answer. Maybe they were afraid he would say what he said later in a more pri-

vate setting.

"Listen, the one thing I could never understand is why friends can't wrestle friends in this sport," Sting would later say. "When you think about it, sports are supposed to be friendly, so why can't friends compete? When I was a kid, I used to wrestle my friends all the time. You know, in a way, this whole situation breeds violence and backstabbing, because if your friend's the champ you can never be champion."

"The way I see it, I pinned Ric fair and square," Sting continued. "It was a great match, it could've gone either way, and it was headed for a draw if I didn't do something drastic, but I pinned him. To me, that makes me worthy of a title shot. But, hey, I'm not going to push it, because Flair's my buddy, things are going well for me now, and he's too busy with

(Continued on page 58)



★ STARRCADE '89: NIGHT

IRON TEAM ROAD WARRIORS— THE FANS ARE KEEPING THEM FROM THE BELTS!



ANIMAL AND HAWK'S prizes for winning the Iron Team competition at Starrcade '89 came in the form of a handshake from NWA World tag team champions Rick and Scott Steiner, a pat on their backs from NWA Vice President Jim Herd, and a loud cheer from the crowd at The Omni in Atlanta.

As Animal and Hawk bounded into the dressing room, they were greeted by another ovation from the other fan favorites. It had truly been a glorious

evening for the Warriors, if one was willing to forget one key fact:

The Warriors were no closer to a World title shot.

In the third match of the Iron Team competition—a unique one-night round-robin tournament featuring the Warriors, the Steiners, Doom, and the New Wild Samoans—the Warriors suffered a shocking pinfall loss to the Steiners. This exceedingly brutal match ended when Hawk clotheslined Scott Steiner from the top rope and Animal

bridged back for the pin. Scott lifted his shoulder at the two-count, but Animal unwittingly had his own shoulders on the mat.

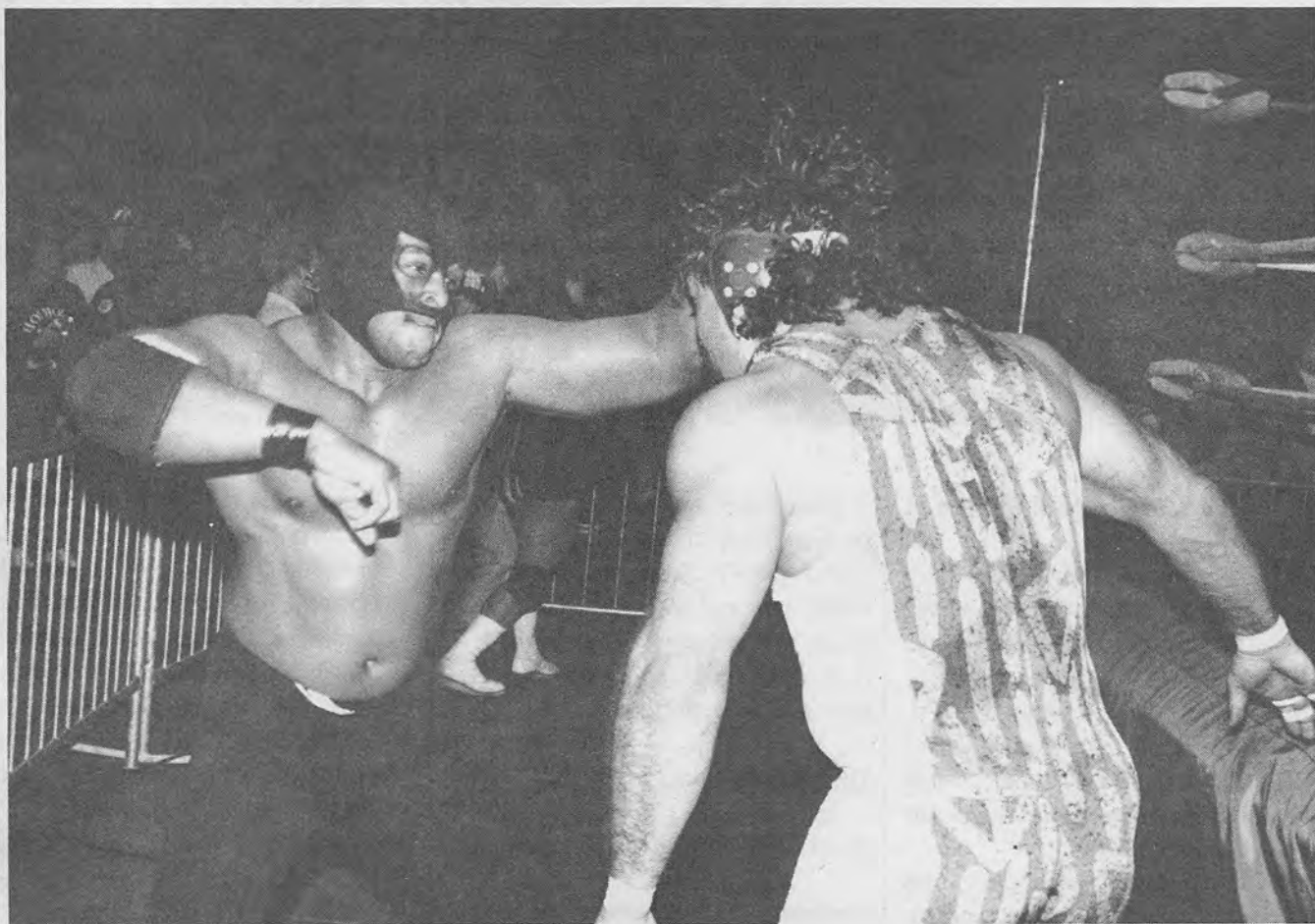
"It was pure instinct," Scott said. "I was as surprised as anyone else when the ref said that Animal had his shoulders on the mat. My primary goal was to avoid the pin. Really, we were very fortunate. I have a lot of respect for the Warriors."

"Yeah, I was surprised," Animal said. "If you ask me, it was a damn

When The Road Warriors won the Iron Team competition at Starrcade '89, their reward came in the form of applause and congratulations. But what Hawk and Animal *really* want is a shot at NWA World tag champions Rick and Scott Steiner

OF THE IRON MEN!

The Road Warriors double-team Doom II (opposite page). Doom I takes a swing at Rick Steiner (below). The Warriors clothesline Doom II (bottom). It was no surprise that the Warriors won, but it was a surprise that Doom didn't score a point.

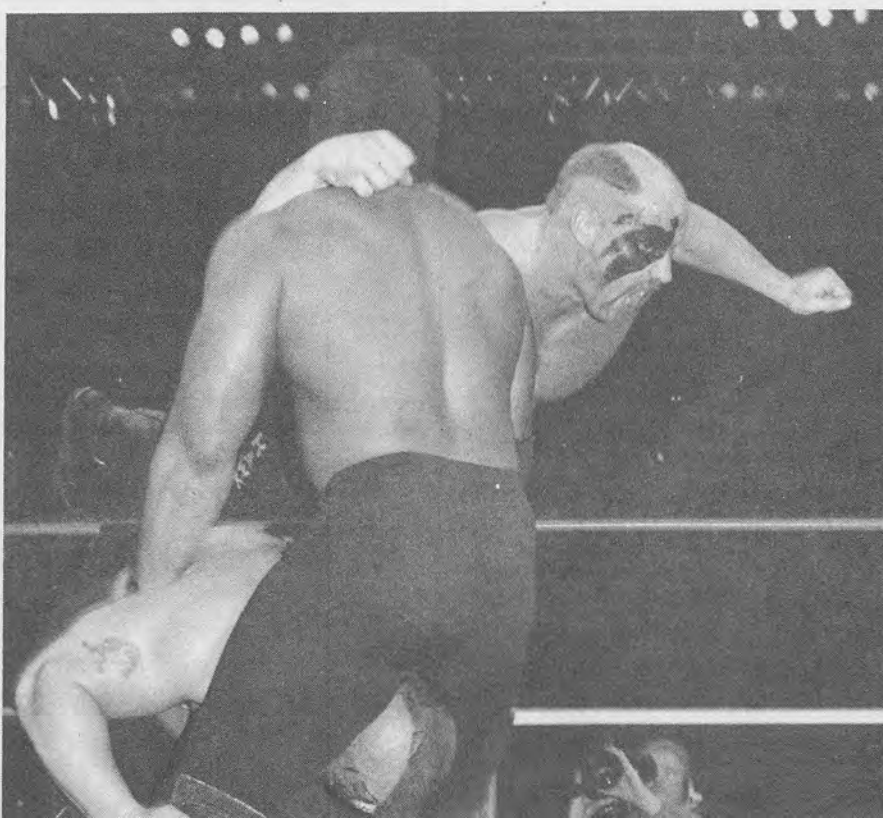


poor way to lose a match.”

But the Warriors were able to shrug off the loss because of their performance in the rest of the tournament. The Warriors won by pinfall over Doom in their first match, picking up 20 points and moving 15 points ahead of the Steiners, who had won by countout over Doom in the opening event. The Steiners took a 15-point lead with their victory over the Warriors, but blew a chance to clinch the Iron Team competition when they lost by disqualification to the Samoans.

That put The Road Warriors in a must-win situation. The Samoans' victory over the Steiners gave them 30 points, good for second place and a 10-point lead over Hawk and Animal.

(Continued on page 60)



HOTSEAT

BUZZ SAWYER

"THE MAD DOG IS MADDER THAN EVER!"

GARY HART KNEW he was in trouble. He had come to a violent parting of the ways with Terry Funk after the former NWA World champion gave up to Ric Flair in the "I Quit" match on November 15 in Troy, New York. Suddenly, Hart's J-Tex Corporation consisted only of NWA TV champion The Great Muta and a mysterious newcomer called The Dragon Master.

Hart's financial backers in Japan were not pleased. This was not the kind of situation that would bring J-Tex to NWA dominance as quickly as they had hoped. Frantically, they searched for a man who could bring the same kind of violent intensity to Hart's stable as Funk once did. Their evil prayers were answered when Buzz Sawyer returned from one of his frequent tours of the Orient.

When Hart got a look at Sawyer's manic and brutal style, he knew he would be the only man in the sport who could possibly replace the wild Funk—and perhaps even surpass the Texan's outrageous ring demeanor. Sawyer is a rugged 242-pound, 10-year veteran of the sport, long famous for his propensity for violent feuds. Many insist that his incredible mid-'80s war with Tommy Rich was the most heated and sickeningly bloody series of battles the sport has ever seen.

What better way of gaining revenge on Flair than to unmuzzle the crazed "Mad Dog"? Associate Editor Bob Smith ventured to Atlanta to try to speak with a man who has rightfully been considered one of the strangest ever seen in a professional ring.

Q: Buzz, how does it feel to be a part of Gary Hart's J-Tex Corporation?

A: *(Sawyer does not respond. He sim-*

“

My style is to get in there and have a good time. That includes rippin' apart everybody I get my hands on.

”

ply stares at the ceiling, grinning maniacally.)

Q: I'm sorry, Buzz. Did you hear my question?

A: *(Still no response.)*

Q: Earth to Sawyer! Buzz, are you sure you can handle being interviewed like this?

A: Handle? Hah! I've got the handle on everybody around here, pal, and don't you forget it, fatso. I can beat Ric Flair. I can beat Arn Anderson. I can beat Ole Anderson. I can beat Sting. I'll even tear apart Lex Luger if Hart wants me to. Anybody Gary wants to do away with, I'll be thrilled to be the man to get the job done.

Q: I don't doubt that at all. From the looks of things in your recent matches, you're every bit as sadistic as you've ever been, and perhaps even more so. But what's the deal with all this howling you've been doing during your bouts? I don't ever recall you doing *that* before. Many people in the NWA think you're losing whatever's left of your mind.

A: Let 'em think whatever the hell they wanna think. Everybody's got their own style, and my style is to get in there and have a good time. That includes rippin' apart everybody I get my hands on. They think I'm crazy, do they? Great! I love it. The "Mad Dog" is madder than ever. If people can't deal with that, they should just stay the hell out of my way.

Q: But why did you choose to return to the NWA now? You've been gone for quite a few years. What





“

**I wanna break some bones.
I need a continuous stream
of bodies that I can bust up.**

”

prompted you to come back?

A: Well, I've been traveling the world, becoming an international legend. The last time I was in the United States for an extended period I was in the World Class area . . .

Q: That's the USWA today.

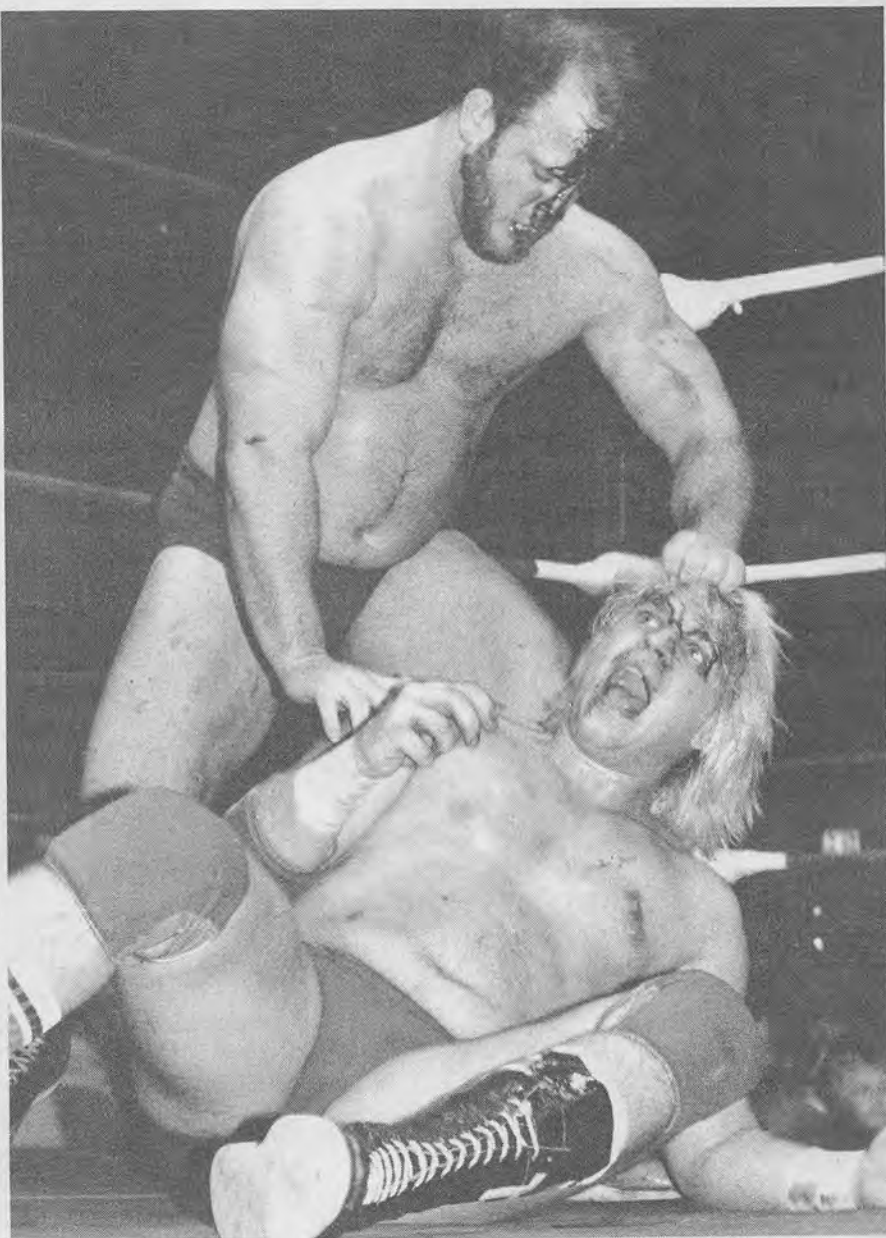
A: *Huh?*

Q: Well, they've changed the name of that federation to the USWA now.

A: Who gives a flip about that garbage? Stop tryin' to confuse me! Anyway, I did good last time in. Me and "Maniac" Matt Borne won the World Class tag team title, back in '86. If you don't believe me, look it up!

Q: Hey, I believe you.

A: You'd better! Anyway, after I ripped apart Texas, I started to get bored. That's why I've been spending so much time in Japan during the past couple of years. Over there, there aren't so many phony-baloney officials running around trying to enforce a bunch of stupid



Buzz Sawyer doesn't let his own blood stop him from bloodying Tommy Rich in this classic 1982 encounter. Sawyer says Rich is still one of his targets.

rules. I could really sink my teeth into the competition over there. I was doin' great, daddy.

Q: So if things were so terrific in Japan, what are you doing back in the NWA?

A: It's all because of Gary Hart, like I said before. He actually flew over to Osaka and waved a big-money contract under my nose. Said he'd make me rich and famous. Hell, I already *was* rich and famous, I told him. What I want is much more important than money.

Q: So what is it that you want, anyway?

A: Can't you tell, you stooge? I wanna break some bones. I need a

continuous stream of bodies that I can bust up, and Hart said he had plenty of enemies I could pounce on in the NWA. So far, things have been pretty easy for me, 'cause they haven't given me all that much competition. Looks like everybody's afraid of me, as usual. But I've gotten some new contracts to get in some six-man tag team matches with my buddies Muta and Dragon Master. We're going to tear apart the Andersons, Sting, and Flair.

Q: That's a lot easier said than done, I assure you. Flair is the NWA World champion, of course, and the Andersons have vowed that no



Sawyer and Ole Anderson slug it out on their knees. Sawyer and his J-Tex cohorts are anxious to feud with the Andersons, Ric Flair, and Sting.

one would ever take advantage of him again—as you did when you and Muta attacked Flair on television back in December.

A: *Awwww*, so Flair can't take it, huh? Typical. Naturally, he's not man enough to challenge me to meet him face to face, so he's gotta hide behind those awful Andersons. Big deal! I'll take on the three of them all at once. I ain't got no kinda fear of those bums at all. Whatever Gary wants me to do, I will. But I've got a certain guy I'd *really* like to sink my teeth into.

Q: Who is that? Is it Sting? Lex Luger?

A: Sure, sure, but that's not who I'm talking about. Personally, I'd like to get my mitts on Terry Funk. That coward. That ingrate. That total waste of humanity.

Q: But why do you want to wrestle Funk? After all, the man just announced his retirement.

A: I couldn't care less. When Funk lost that "I Quit" match to Flair, he put the shame on Gary and all the other J-Tex wrestlers. He lost a lot of money for Gary by losing that match, and since then Hart has had to reorganize. That's why they wanted *me* here. But if you

ask me, Funk is a big baby. Imagine, giving up a match just because he was locked in Flair's figure-four leglock! That bozo must have a real low pain tolerance. I'd love to wrestle him, because I'd show him what *real* pain is all about.

Q: But I know that *you* know what pain is about, too. Who could ever forget your feud with Tommy Rich back in 1982 and 1983? Both of you bled buckets, and it seems that war would never end. Rich . . .

A: *Auggh!* Don't mention that name!

Q: Why not? A weak spot from your past, maybe?

A: Hey, don't get smart with me, boy. That idiot Rich caused me more pain and suffering than any other guy I've ever gotten in the ring with. I've got to give him credit. The more I kept coming after him, the more punishment the guy wanted to take. Now, everybody knows I won that feud . . .

Q: Oh, really? That's not what the record books say. Rich won the last bout between you two in a steel cage in Atlanta in 1983.

A: So what? All I know is, I wanna get back at that Tennessee redneck. He's in the NWA now, too. And who knows? Maybe this time,



“

Anybody Gary [Hart] wants me to do away with, I'll be thrilled to be the man to get the job done.

”

they'll carry him out of the ring in a pine box. *Hahaha!* I'd like that. I really would.

Q: I have no doubts that you would. But don't you have higher aspirations? You claim that all you care about is destruction, but wouldn't you like to go after Flair's NWA World title?

A: Uh, I guess so. But not really. See, Gary's explained it all to me. If we can cripple guys like Flair and Sting and Steve Williams and the Andersons one by one, then there won't be nothing left but J-Tex. Then we'll control all the titles and all the money around here. Sounds like an easy job, if you ask me.

Q: If you ask *me*, you've got your work cut out for you.

A: Bull. I'm ready to rumble. Just bring 'em on, and I'll pulverize 'em one by one. Now get the hell out of my way. "Mad Dog" is hungry. I gotta find a new bone to chew on. □

Once upon a time, these five
wrestlers were among the
biggest stars in the WWF,
competing for both super stardom
and the chance to
win the WWF World title.

But if they continue
following their current career
paths, 1990 could be a
wasted year for these
premier competitors

LOST IN THE SHUFFLE 1990:

FIVE WWF STARS WHO FACE OBLIVION

IT WAS IN the not-so-distant past that these men were the best of the best, considered to be among the finest competitors in the sport. For the most part, they still are. These talented grapplers *should* be contenders for any title in any federation in which they choose to compete.

But when a wrestler is competing in the World Wrestling Federation, there is only room for a very small number of contenders. With only the World, Intercontinental, and tag team titles to strive for, wrestlers must be at the very top of their games in order to even be considered for shots at the organization's prestigious selection of belts.

In the WWF, however, sometimes even the best contenders can be overlooked—and, in many cases, forgotten. Does anyone remember The Blue Blazer, the masked high-flyer that many had tabbed for immortality? Whatever happened to Don Muraco? Or momentary phenoms like Outback Jack? And can anyone believe that The Honky Tonk Man, now mired in opening matches, was once the Intercontinental champion for more than a year?

It's all too easy for wrestlers to get lost in the WWF shuffle. Many times, careers never recover from month after month of preliminary matches and meaningless feuds. The following men all have the ability—and the potential—to do great things in the future. But will they get the chance?

The editors of *Inside Wrestling* believe it is time for these wrestlers to take stock of themselves before their careers suffer irreparable damage. They are in control of their own destinies. If they aren't careful, they could wind up on the WWF scrap heap.

Ted DiBiase: On February 5, 1988, the "Million-Dollar Man" paid Andre the Giant a large sum of money not only to defeat Hulk Hogan for the WWF World title (aided illegally by bogus referee Earl Hebner), but to have Andre hand the title over to him after the victory. Although the transaction would be disallowed by WWF President Jack Tunney, DiBiase became the most powerful—and most hated—man in the WWF.

But the two years that have followed DiBiase's tainted "victory" have been frustrating ones for the millionaire. Unable to win Hogan's WWF title, DiBiase purchased his own "million-dollar belt" late in 1988. In reality, this unsanctioned

RANDY SAVAGE



CURT HENNIG



THE POWERS OF PAIN



TED DiBIASE



jewel-studded belt means nothing at all. DiBiase has been feuding with Jake Roberts in a war he's perilously close to losing.

What seems to have been forgotten is that DiBiase is one of the finest technical wrestlers in the sport, and should certainly be capable of challenging for the World title for as long as he chooses. By forgetting his real goal and surrounding himself with garish reminders of his wealth, DiBiase continually sells *himself* short.

Curt Hennig: From "Mr. Perfect" to "Mr. Forgotten"? It could happen.

Since entering the WWF in July 1988, Hennig picked and chose his opponents very carefully, and didn't suffer a pinfall loss until December 1 in Austin, Texas. Unfortunately for Hennig, it was Hulk Hogan who captured the victory. The next night in San Antonio, Texas, Hogan pinned Hennig *again*.

Hennig seems to have been thwarted in his attempts to capture the WWF title, and his strange relationship with Lanny "The Genius" Poffo had already cheapened "Mr. Perfect's" image. But as a former AWA World champion, Hennig clearly has too much ability to allow himself to fade from the forefront of WWF contention. Instead of allowing himself to fade out of sight, he should set his sights on Intercontinental champion The Ultimate Warrior. But a career of wrestling the likes of Koko B. Ware and Paul Roma—as he's already resumed doing—seems a bit imperfect to us.

The Powers of Pain: It was early in 1988 that the massive Warlord and Barbarian, managed by Paul Jones, were terrorizing the entire NWA—including The Road Warriors—with their strength and brutality. Today, this same team can't get past the comical and ineffective Bushwhackers. What happened?

It may all be the fault of their current manager, Mr. Fuji. The Oriental manager believed he had pulled off a coup when he abandoned Demolition and switched alliances to Warlord and Barbarian during the 1988 Survivor Series. Since then, Demolition established the longest WWF tag title reign of all time,

TERRY TAYLOR





Hulk Hogan whips Hennig across the ring (above). Hennig thought he'd easily win the WWF World title. He was wrong.

and later won the belts a *second* time. Meanwhile, Warlord and Barbarian have almost been forgotten in the WWF.

A solution? The Powers should insist that Fuji strive to make them title contenders once again. If he can't, perhaps it's time for Warlord and Barbarian to try going it alone. They can't possibly be in worse shape than they are now.

Randy Savage: Last year, Randy Savage was WWF World champion. Today, he's the "Macho King" of the WWF. Does anybody care?

For some reason, Savage has abandoned his title hopes and is now more concerned with his cape and crown. But this designation is as dubious as DiBiase's store-bought belt. Savage has been extremely effective in recent months, particularly when he gains the assistance of his new manager, Sensational Sherri. But he's also fallen from the list of title contenders.

Taylor locks up with Steve Lombardi (left); adopting the "Red Rooster" persona has hurt Taylor's career status. Barbarian bears hugs Ax (below); one year ago, the Powers were contending for the World title, now they're feuding with The Rockers.



Jake Roberts arm-twists DiBiase (above). The "Million-Dollar Man" has been losing to "The Snake" frequently.

A year of watching Savage defend his crown against the likes of Hacksaw Duggan, Ron Garvin, and Tito Santana seems a depressing prospect at best. Savage was once a champion and one of the most respected men in the sport. Settling for "royalty" is settling for less—a *lot* less.

Terry Taylor: Let's face it: Terry Taylor is chicken. Actually, he's a rooster—The Red Rooster, to be exact. He also seems to be enjoying his new image. He actually describes his ring style as "poultry in motion."

Of all the wrestlers who have entered the WWF in the past several years, Taylor may now be the most embarrassing. He's gone from a well-rounded former UWF TV and World



Hacksaw Duggan aims Savage's head at the ringpost (above). Savage won the title of "king" from Duggan.

Class Texas champion into a (pardon the pun) shell of his former self. He's also losing more matches than at any other time in his career. Suddenly, Honky Tonk Man is beating him on a regular basis.

The answer for Taylor seems simple. If he washed the coloring out of his hair and forgot about his turkey strut, he could be taken seriously again. But with his silly image, Taylor has made himself a target—he's just *begging* to be scrambled. □

THIS MONTH IN...

THE Wrestler



LEX LUGER takes aim at **RIC FLAIR**—
Preview & Analysis Of Wrestle War '90



HULK HOGAN—A decade of greatness!
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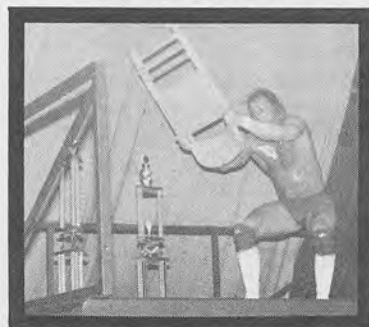
All this and much more . . .
in the April 1990 issue of
The Wrestler

ON SALE NOW!

PRO Wrestling ILLUSTRATED



HULK HOGAN gets revenge—and “Mr.
Perfect” **CURT HENNIG** isn’t perfect
anymore!



RIC FLAIR is named *PWI* Wrestler of
the Decade—and **LEX LUGER**
is outraged!

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A **FULL-COLOR** foldout plus career bio
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announced in the *PWI* Dream Tag Team
Tournament! . . . **THE ROCKERS**
command respect . . . An exclusive
“Press Conference” with **STING** . . .
JERRY LAWLER: “The fans have
changed, not me!” . . . “Scouting
Reports” of six top stars

All this and much more . . .
in the April 1990 issue of
Pro Wrestling Illustrated

ON SALE NOW!

The telephone wires sizzle every month as two top wrestlers voice their rage and hostility toward each other. This is the unedited transcript of their conversation, your chance to see the raw emotion that results when two antagonists face off ... One on One

“NOT VERY LONG ago, Jerry Lawler was one of the most respected men in the sport. He carried his reputation proudly and was rarely guilty of rulebreaking. Even his feud with Kerry Von Erich—though it was hard-fought—was conducted in a sportsmanlike manner ... until recently.

The Lawler-Von Erich war began in May 1988, shortly after Lawler won the AWA World title. His most heated challenges came from Von Erich, who at the time was World Class heavy-weight champion.

On December 13, 1988, Lawler added the World Class belt to his collection by beating Von Erich. The following month, Lawler was stripped of the AWA belt for missing several title defenses. Since then, Lawler has defended the World Class (now USWA) championship in both the USWA and CWA areas ... much to the chagrin of fans in both federations.

Little by little, Lawler became a more flagrant violator of USWA rules. Strangely, he remained a model citizen in the CWA. Then he broke his ties with his friends, the fans, and, in a way, the Lawler we had always known. He's a full-fledged rulebreaker, worthy of our spite.

Meanwhile, in Texas, Kerry won the USWA Texas title in late-October and defended it proudly. But on December 15, in a brutal title vs. title match, Von Erich lost the belt to Lawler.

That set off a series of events that enraged Von Erich and the fans. Lawler dropped the Texas belt down an outhouse, claiming it was worthless,

ONE ON ONE



“Don't you ever start to get weary after your shoulders have been decisively pinned to the mat?”

—Jerry Lawler

and denigrating both the title and Von Erich. It was a heinous action. Von Erich was enraged. Lawler laughed. What an imperfect setting it was to bring these two men together again ... “One on One.”

JERRY LAWLER:

Well, if it isn't little ol' Kerry Von Erich, the man I've beaten so many times I've lost count. That Texas belt might've been another worthy trinket to add to my trophy case, but don't you Texans ever wash? That belt was filthy, smelly, and disgusting. When I threw it down my outhouse, the flies packed their bags and left Tennessee.

KERRY VON ERICH:

Don't you go putting down the

good people of my home state, Lawler. Somebody oughta teach you some manners. You don't treat a belt that way and you don't say those things about people when you're their guests. I shouldn't have to remind you, Lawler, that you're a guest of the Lone Star State. **JL:** A guest? You mean to imply that whenever I step into that dilapidated barn you call the Sportatorium that those hayseeds are my *hosts*? Get real, Kerry! The place stinks, so do those idiot fans, and so do you. It's bad enough that I had to soil my hands on your carcass when I put you down. Don't you ever get tired of being humiliated? Don't you ever start to get weary after your shoul-

N ONE



"I'm doing just fine, Lawler. The people know a champion when they see one. I'll go by their judgment."

—Kerry Von Erich

ders have been decisively pinned to the mat?

KVE: And don't you ever get tired of people fighting your battles for you? If not for that skunk Terrance M. Garvin, I'm still champion and you're nothing.

JL: What's Terry got to do with anything? As far as I'm concerned, he's the finest young color commentator in the sport today. He's a little airy for my tastes, but you can't have everything. Why are you blaming Terry for your troubles?

KVE: Are you nuts, Lawler? You got marbles in your head or something? Garvin threw you that chair, and without it you didn't stand a chance. You already blew the chain bit. Don't give me this innocent Garvin gar-

bage, because we both know it ain't true. We both know that you can't beat me without a lot of help, and that's what you got.

JL: Hey, I'll admit that Garvin threw the chair in the ring, but he did it only because you tried to steal it from him earlier in the match. Naturally, since even a prancing screamer like that is twice the man you are, he managed to keep you away from the chair. But when you tried to go after it again, he just threw it away, and it just happened to land in the ring. As for the chain, that's ridiculous. Never has "The King" stooped to using foreign objects or anything of the kind. Besides, all your claims are hot air, since I'm the

new champion, right?

KVE: Wrong, because being a champion isn't what it's all about. There's a bit more to it. First of all, there's self-respect, and I don't understand how you can have any after all you've done. It must've been a lonely Christmas, Lawler, without any friends. I'm sure Bill Dundee, Chris Champion, and Dutch Mantel feel a lot richer than you do. Second of all, there's the fans, and if you turn your back on them, you might as well leave the sport. They're the people that keep us going. And how about a little thing called sportsmanship? How about respecting a title and what it stands for? The way I see it, you might wear two belts, but you're not a champion at all. As for the chain, that's not even worth discussing because there are tapes of you using that thing. I'll tell you something, Jerry, it just ain't right.

JL: What ain't right is what's going on inside your head. First of all, I may be a double champion, but I can't wear the Texas belt 'cause I flushed it down the crapper, remember? But you're right about one thing—being a champion *isn't* what it's all about. Championships are supposed to bring a man prestige, honor, and a whole lotta money. As far as I can see, the only thing that Texas belt could've brought me was a bad case of scabies. Same goes for all those fans out there, and that goes for the ones in Memphis as well as Texas. Those people turned against me for no reason. So right now, I've got my *important* title belt—the USWA—and I've got my priorities in the right place. Shame the same thing can't be said for you.

KVE: I'm doing just fine, Lawler. The people know a champion when they see one. I'll go by their judgment.

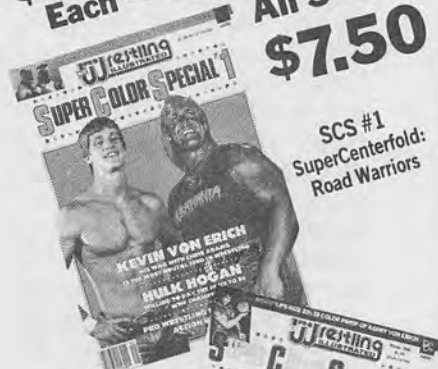
JL: You go by the barber and get a haircut, boy. I'm sick of having you accuse me of every crime in existence. I'll give you a rematch for your stupid belt, but it'll be the last one—because I'm going to finish off the Von Erich legend once and for all. □

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SINCERELY YOURS

(Continued from page 5)

scrapers: *Violence With A Twist!*" (February 1990) demonstrates. Sid Vicious and Dan Spivey are good, but they have a lot to accomplish before they can be mentioned in the same breath as the Warriors.

RALPH NEEDHAM
Milwaukee

MACHO MINDLESS

It was only a year or two ago that I regarded Randy Savage as one of the greatest wrestlers around. When he was WWF World champion, no one could touch him. Even after he lost the belt to Hulk Hogan, I thought he'd

remain the number-one contender for a long time.

Then he became the "Macho King," and everything changed. Having that stupid, meaningless "honor" has made him much less than what he was. He's not even a legitimate contender for the Intercontinental belt. And Sensational Sherri has made him much more reliant on outside interference than ever before.

This isn't the same "Macho Man" who shot to fame in the 1980s.

NATALIE COLEMAN
St. Paul, MN

(Continued on page 48)



"Macho King" Randy Savage (with his "queen" Sensational Sherri) has become an absolute joke, in the opinion of reader Natalie Coleman.

BACK ISSUES OF



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March 1986/Stories include: Windham & Rotundo, Warriors-Russians, Rude.
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January 1987/Stories include: Rude-Flair, Piper, T.A., Taylor.
February 1987/Stories include: Hogan-Piper-Orndorff, Taylor, Flair.
March 1987/Stories include: Flair, Missy, Luger, Bulldogs, Koloffs.
April 1987/Stories include: Windham, Steamboat, Ellering, Duggan.
May 1987/Stories include: Windham & Luger, Steamboat, Hogan-Andre.
June 1987/Stories include: Piper-Adonis, Horsemen, Adams, Hall, Brody.
July 1987/Stories include: Danny Davis, DiBiase, Rockers, Rotundo, Andersons.
August 1987/Stories include: Dusty & Nikita, Hogan, Mike Von, Cornette.
September 1987/Stories include: Hogan-Race, R&R Exp., Rich, Honky Tonk.
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November 1987/Stories include: War Games, Mr. T, Bulldogs, Rhodes.
December 1987/Stories include: Freebirds, Rhodes, Magnum, Savage, Perez.
January 1988/Stories include: R&R-Horsemen, Hogan, Flair-Garvin.

February 1988/Stories include: Savage, Kevin Von, Sting, Tully & Arn.
March 1988/Stories include: Bigelow, Adams, Koloff, Honky Tonk, Freebirds.
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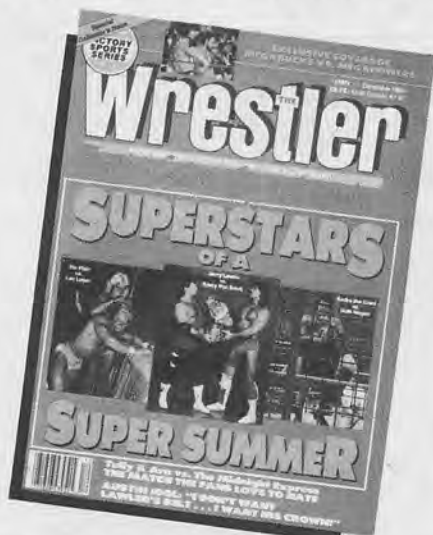
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SINCERELY YOURS

(Continued from page 46)

HOORAY FOR THE REF

I was glad to see referee Tommy Young get some recognition in David Rosenbaum's "Dressing Room Door" column in the February 1990 issue. For years, Young has been one of the sport's most consistent and most respected officials, but we don't hear enough about him. I guess it's true that you know a ref's doing a good job when you don't notice him.

I suggest the folks at *Pro Wrestling Illustrated* create a new award: Referee of the Year. Is there any doubt who the winner would be?

MARYANN HUNTER
Lincoln, NE

WHERE'S GILBERT?

I would like to know why Eddie Gilbert is being ignored by NWA promoters. Gilbert is a fine wrestler, but

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Eddie Gilbert backdrops Dan Spivey. Reader Holly Regan wonders why Gilbert, who has held several titles during his career, has been relegated to bottom-of-the-card matches.

he hasn't been getting top matches. Why is this? Gilbert can still compete with the best of them; he's still a young man. I would like to see him get the respect that is due him. He's won many titles over the years.

In my estimation, Gilbert deserves a lot more consideration than somebody like Tommy Rich, who recently had several U.S. title shots at Lex Luger. Gilbert would beat Rich any day of the week.

HOLLY REGAN
Savannah, GA

DIRTY DUTCH

Everybody is yelling about how Jerry Lawler is turning bad down here. They're yelling about how Dutch Mantel, Chris Champion, and Bill Dundee have tried to help Lawler and how he turned against them. Well, these so-

called friends of Jerry's better learn that he's still the number-one man in the CWA. He's the USWA champion. That's something they'll never be.

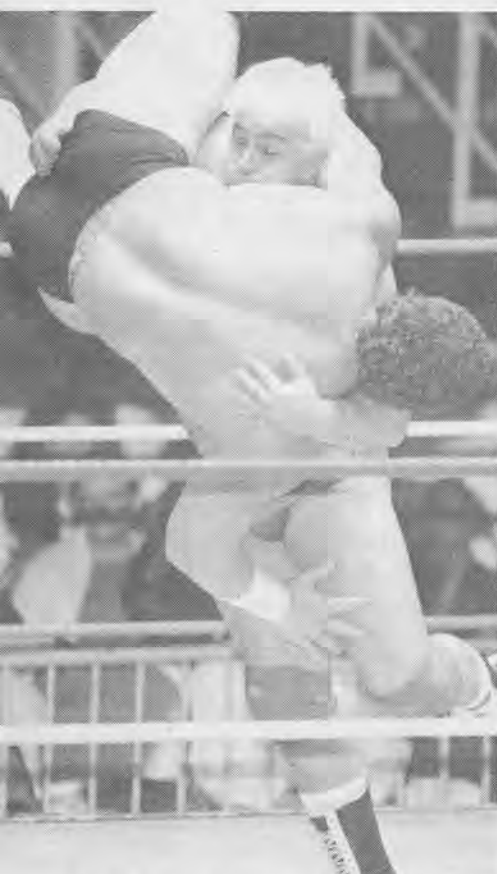
GREG CORBIN
Memphis, TN

NO BRAVOS FOR DINO

How a no-talent like Dino Bravo could go so far in the WWF rankings is beyond me. Okay, he has a good physique, but he's not a good wrestler. Still, he's getting a lot of shots at The Ultimate Warrior's Intercontinental title. Don't even *suggest* he'll take the belt from Ultimate.

Bravo has a big mouth, and that's about it. At least he made a smart move by dumping Frenchy Martin and replacing him with Jimmy Hart. And with The Canadian Earthquake in his corner, Bravo has a ton of outside help. Still, he's not a championship contender in my book.

BEN PERTMAN
Wilmington, DE □



Dino Bravo powerslams Hercules. Even though Bravo has piled up many impressive victories, reader Ben Pertman doesn't consider him championship material.

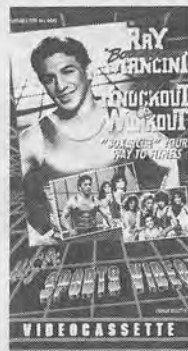
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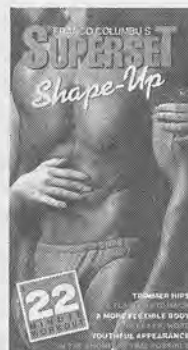
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DRESSING ROOM DOOR

(Continued from page 8)

Jim Herd. "If you bought the NFL, you wouldn't get rid of the Super Bowl, right? Well, this is our Super Bowl. We just changed it around this time. We're very pleased with the results, although there's always room for improvement."

Of course, several wrestlers—none of whom spoke on the record—were angry that one of the biggest cards of the year was restricted to four wrestlers and four teams.

"This is our spotlight," one wrestler said. "This is something the guys look forward to. Sure, the fans want to see the superstars. But without us, you'd have two matches on every card. We're the meat and potatoes."

The NWA officials and promoters know this, but the federation was in a drastic situation. Three years ago, the NWA planned to make Starrcade, a Thanksgiving Day tradition, its first pay-per-view event. WWF head Vince McMahon Jr., a shrewd businessman as always, countered by scheduling another pay-per-view card, the inaugural Survivor Series, for the same night.

Since the WWF already had a hugely popular pay-per-view card in WrestleMania, cable operators went with the proven commodity. Starrcade's pay-per-view debut was delayed; in 1988, the card was moved to late December.

Score that one for the WWF. It was a major victory. The NWA, a federation already on its heels, was sent reeling.

With Starrcade '89, the NWA proved it had some innovative ideas of its own. The card was clearly superior to the 1989 Survivor Series. Although the WWF had better pay-per-view numbers, the NWA regained some momentum on its biggest day.

"When you really think about



Rick Steamboat wrestled Ric Flair on two NWA pay-per-view cards in 1989.

it," Herd said, "having a card on Thanksgiving really isn't so important. In our minds, a good product will sell on *any* day. I don't think anyone doubts the quality of Starrcade."

Not this time. Even if it didn't *feel* like Starrcade, it felt like wrestling should be.

Andre the Giant and Haku winning the WWF World tag team title is a pretty solid sign that the tag team picture in the federation is sad—and getting sadder.

What happened? Well, The Hart Foundation got a little older, Jacques and Raymond Rougeau never lived up to expectations, Tully Blanchard and Arn Anderson left, The Powers of Pain's ability doesn't measure up to its size, and we're still waiting for The Rockers to come of age. Basically, a federation that seemed to be drowning in teams just a

year or so ago turned out to be a bit dry.

Andre is far past his prime and Haku has already been badly humbled by Hulk Hogan. In this case, the whole is much larger than the sum of its parts, but I never thought this team was good enough to beat Demolition. It's hard to believe they'll hold the belts for long.

Anyway, this entire scenario brings to mind what's going on in the NWA these days. Is the NWA's tag team roster really loaded, or are we being set up for a disappointment?



Haku and Andre the Giant's winning the WWF tag title proves the quality of competition has dropped, writes Dave Rosenbaum.

Rick and Scott Steiner, the NWA World tag champs, are a solid duo and capable of beating any team in the world. The Road Warriors are a proven, though aging, commodity. Doom fell flat on its face at Starrcade and doesn't seem as fearsome as once thought. The Wild Samoans, on the other hand, impressed at Starrcade and appear headed for greater things. Michael Hayes and Jim Garvin are fading fast. The Midnight Express is wrestling better than ever. The Dynamic Dudes probably *do* need a manager; it's not Cornette.

There's really no comparison between the NWA and WWF tag teams. Right now, the NWA has a big advantage, hands down. ☐

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THE INSIDER

(Continued from page 14)



Ric Flair sets up The Great Muta for a kneebreaker. Ellner believes that Muta's poor showing at Starrcade '89 was a fluke.

plicably, Muta finished the round-robin tournament with zero points. Zero. I'm not at all surprised that Doom finished with zero in the Iron Team competition; Woman is lovely to look at, but as a match strategist she's on a par with Italian Stallion. I suspect that there's

serious trouble between Muta and Gary Hart, and that Muta carried that trouble with him into the ring that night. Too bad. The man's skills are considerable, and a pay-per-view nation got a distinctly wrong impression of a masterly wrestling talent. Look for Muta to bounce back in a big way in 1990.

And as far as bouncing back is

concerned, the AWA has yet to bounce back into the forefront of the minds of the wrestling public at large, least of all as a result of its Team Challenge Series. A solid idea at its core, the Series has been beset by problems ranging from bad officiating, wrestler interference, ridiculous interteam trades, and a stunning lack of team spirit. Ever a champion chest-thumper, even Sgt. Slaughter looks like he'd rather be at home in his den screening *G.I. Joe* cartoons and counting his doll royalties. Don't even get me started on Baron Von Raschke and Larry Zbyszko.

But all these different subjects have caused me to digress from my main point, which is that the '80s were not only the most important decade for the sport, they were the silliest. Cyndi Lauper was hailed by Joe Public as the personification of wrestling more so than Stan Hansen; that about says it all for the decade as far as I'm concerned. And as the decade wore on, the level of ridiculousness seemed inversely proportional to the number of hairs on the heads of Hulk Hogan and Bill Apter combined.

The '80s saw the WWF transform from a solid wrestling organization into a multinational megapromotion that chewed up wrestlers (and wrestlers' self-respect) and spat them out like so many wads of chewing gum. We saw snakes and dogs and pies and boxing gloves and bad movies and bad supercards and higher prices and wallet-gouging merchandising... we saw wrestling come of age. Sometimes the level and speed of change made the mat sport in the '80s seem like eastern Europe in 1989.

I fear that the '90s won't be very much different than the '80s, only more of the same, but to even wilder extremes.

More than that, I fear that my fear will be realized. ☐

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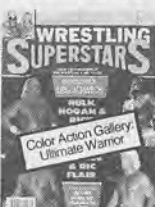
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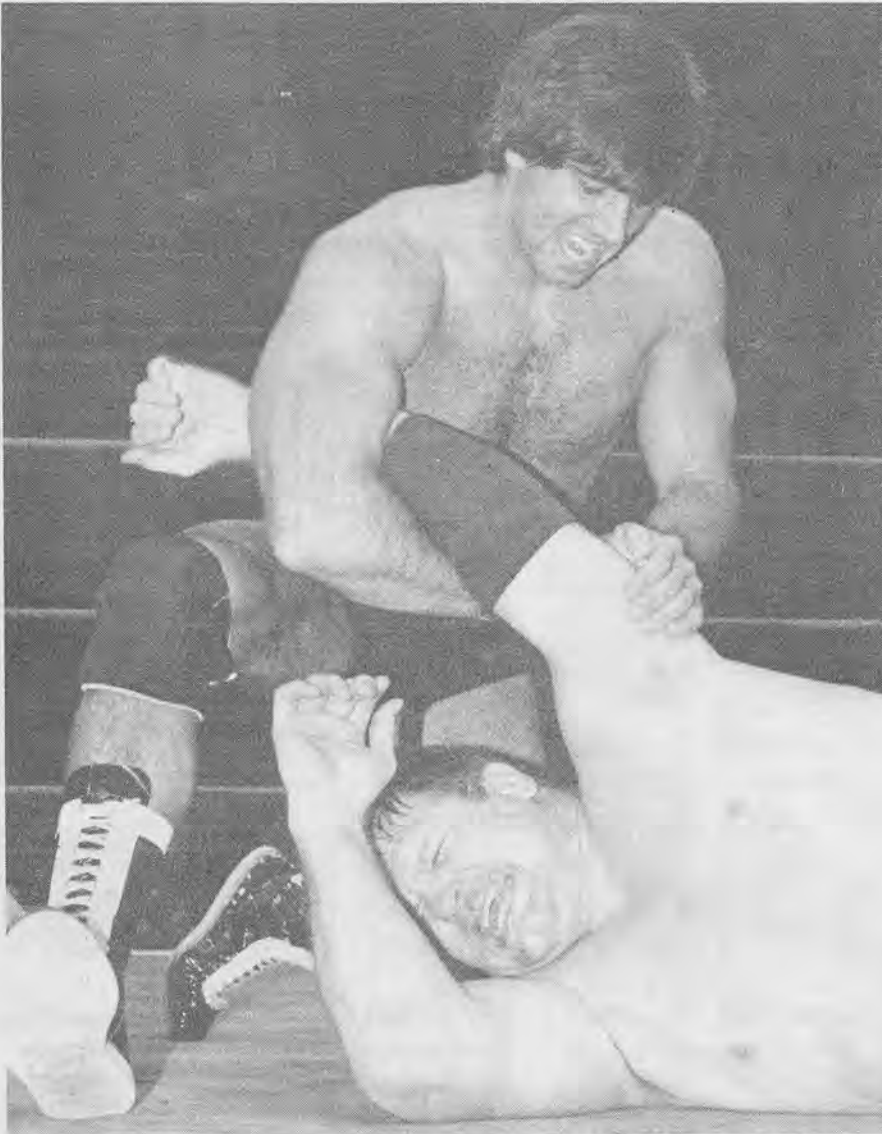
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ON ASSIGNMENT

(Continued from page 16)



Martel armlocks Stan Hansen, who is disgusted by his former rival's attitude change. Hunter believes that despite his recent success, Martel is not the wrestler he used to be.

criticized for leaving Martel when they were on the verge of winning the World tag belts, but maybe he was giving us the first signs of Martel's impending attitude change.

Shortly thereafter, Martel formed Strike Force with Tito Santana, and this explosive team almost immediately won the WWF World tag belts from The Hart Foundation.

They didn't hold them for long. Five months later at WrestleMania IV, Demolition scored a shocking upset to win the title. According to Santana, Martel started acting strangely after the loss. Maybe it

was the injury. Martel was still hurting; he never really recovered from the punishment sustained during his AWA title reign. We started seeing less and less of Strike Force. That was a shame, because the ring never looked better than when they were in it.

The WrestleMania V incident changed everything for good. Santana mistakenly struck Martel. Martel took it the wrong way and walked. The next time we saw him, his ego was blown up as big as a hot-air balloon.

He calls himself "The Model." He thinks women swoon over him. He was right. Not anymore.

Most women I know wouldn't go near a man with such a false sense of security. If you ask me, Martel knows his career is coming to an end, can't cope with the injuries any longer, and is trying to convince us that he's still something special.

Something special went head-to-head with Hansen every other night. Something special beat Jumbo Tsuruta for the AWA World title. Something special respected the fans and opponents. Something special is long gone, special no longer.

His victories over Brutus Beefcake notwithstanding, Martel is headed on a fast road to nowhere. To me, one of the pleasures of wrestling is watching the three distinct parts of a particular favorite's career.

Part one is the developmental years, when the young man learns the ropes, takes his lumps, scores an upset win here and there, and establishes himself as a star of the future.

Part two is when everything comes together. The talent, the experience, the determination, and the hunger are all at their peak, and the man becomes a champion. Handled properly, he's a champion worthy of respect.

Part three is when the wear and tear takes its toll on the body. The skills start to deteriorate, but the man still has the intelligence to beat younger and more skilled opponents. The prime is past, but the man still has his dignity and respect for the game. The slide becomes less painful to his fans, because the man still honors his profession.

Takes notes, Rick Martel. After passing parts one and two with flying colors, you're making a disgrace out of an outstanding career.

Rick Martel, "The Model," is a model wrestler no more. □

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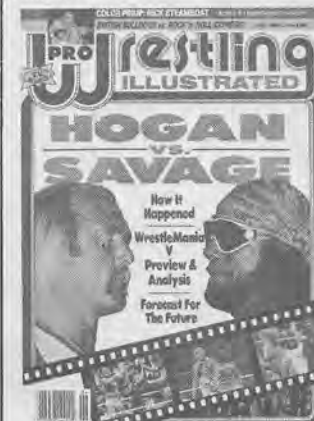
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ULTIMATE WARRIOR

(Continued from page 31)



The Warrior pins Curtis Thompson. As Intercontinental champion, the Warrior has dominated all competition. If a match against Hogan ever did come off, the Warrior would match up well with the "Hulkster" in strength and skill.

But for now, the Warrior needs Hogan more than Hogan needs the Warrior. The "Hulkster" has the big title. There is, however, one way he can get there: by engineering a devious attack on Hogan, one so vile and violent that the WWF—and Hogan—would have no recourse but to sign the match.

It's a must-have-Hogan situation for the WWF's ultimate physical specimen.

"This has really been the situation with the Warrior for a few

years," said former I-C and NWA World champion Rick Steamboat. "He wanted Hogan right away, but he was a newcomer without credentials so they made him work his way up. Then it became obvious that he had the goods to go with Hogan, but he had to win the Intercontinental title first. By the time [Rick] Rude beat him at WrestleMania V, I think the Warrior was totally bored with the belt. At that point he was down, so he had to get it back. But now he's hit a total brick wall, nowhere to go,

and he's a fan favorite; he won't get Hogan.

"Listen," Steamboat continued, "I don't think too much of the Warrior's ability, because he can't wrestle a lick, he just throws people around. But in the WWF, where you really can get by with limited scientific skills and plenty of power, the Warrior is the most viable contender for the belt. He deserves a World title shot more than anyone else there, especially Curt Hennig. Hennig's a great wrestler, but the WWF has become a muscle show and he just gets overwhelmed."

This is high praise coming from Steamboat, who admittedly returned to the NWA last January because he wanted more of a challenge than the WWF offered. Nonetheless, Steamboat makes several solid points, the most important of which is that power with limited skill is often enough in the WWF.

Surely, when power is combined with the knowledge of how to deliver a devastating clothesline and use the ropes to turn a 280-pound muscular body into a dangerous guided missile, the worthiness of a title shot becomes greater. The Warrior did to Andre the Giant what Hogan never could: He beat him quickly and decisively.

If the Warrior doesn't get the title match with Hogan, he'll have to make several decisions. The first involves how long he thinks Hogan will be able to hold the title. At press time, Hogan was dominating Hennig; he has devastated nearly every top wrestler in the WWF, and there's no reason to believe that an unknown newcomer will come along and beat him.

The Warrior can wait for Hogan to retire or lose the title, or he can look for another federation. Can



Hennig chinlocks Hogan. Because Hogan and Ultimate are on friendly terms, the only way they'd wrestle is if one man angered the other.

he survive in the NWA? Certainly, but it's doubtful if he would be as successful, just as it's doubtful that Ric Flair would be as successful in the WWF as he is in the NWA. It's a matter of style, not ability. The Road Warriors struggled to win even one NWA World title, and inexplicably failed to get past less powerful, but more skilled, teams.

The Warrior is in a difficult situation. He *must* have Hogan. If he doesn't get him, he'll have no choice but to remain in his role as secondary champion, always living in Hogan's shadow. Perhaps in a few years Hogan will call it quits. Can the Warrior wait that long?

He is aggressive and angry, ready to take the world by storm. Patience has never been an Ultimate Warrior virtue. He might attack Hogan once. If he fails to land a title shot, he'll attack him again and again. How long could Hogan ignore such humiliation? Certainly, the "Hulkster's" ego probably wouldn't allow him to ignore it even once.

The day of reckoning will quickly be upon us. The WWF must deal with it. Hogan must deal with it. Eventually, *everyone* must deal with The Ultimate Warrior. ☐

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IRON MAN STING

(Continued from page 33)

Luger."

That's exactly the point. Luger and Flair were the favorites to win the unique four-way Iron Man competition at Starrcade '89 in Atlanta, but Sting came out of nowhere to score one of the most shocking upsets of the year. It was a performance worthy of reward.

The evening started out ominously for Sting. He was pinned by Luger in the opening match when Luger held the second rope with his left hand and put his left foot on the bottom rope for leverage. "I couldn't figure out why I couldn't kick out," Sting said later. "When I looked at the replay back in the dressing room, I knew why."

That gave Luger 20 points and the early lead. Flair, however, quickly evened things up by pinning The Great Muta. It was the first time since entering the NWA that Muta had been pinned.

Flair armlocks Luger (below); their Starrcade match was a time-limit draw. Luger yells in pain as he's caught in Muta's toehold (right); Muta was disqualified when he blew his green mist into Luger's eyes.

Less than half an hour later, Muta suffered his *second* NWA pinfall loss, this time to Sting. Sting delivered a sensational dropkick that dropped Muta off the top rope and onto the cable extending out from the third turnbuckle. One spectacular superplex later, Sting had 20 points to put him in a three-way tie for first place with Luger and Flair.

"The Muta match was a must-win situation," Sting said, "but I knew I still needed some help."

He got that help one match later, when Luger and Flair battled to a 15-minute time-limit draw, tying them for first with 25 points. If either man had won by pinfall or submission, Sting would have been 20 points behind instead of five.

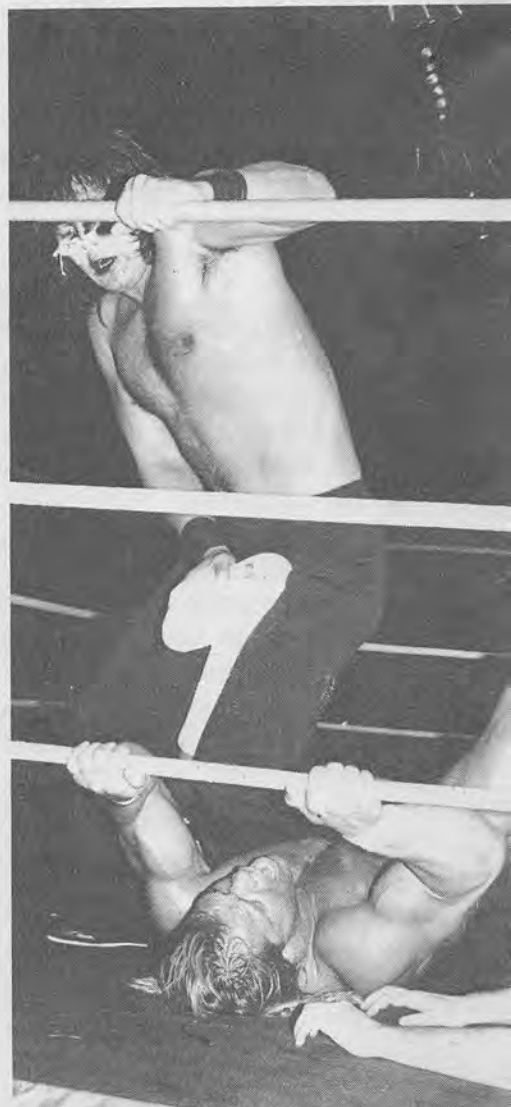
Muta finished with no points, although his illegal tactics in the fifth match kept Luger from eliminating Sting. If Luger had won by pinfall or submission, he would

have had 45 points and there would have been no way for Sting to win. When Muta was disqualified for blowing his green mist into Luger's eyes, Luger was left with 35 points, a 10-point lead over Flair, and a 15-point lead over Sting.

Luger was ready to start his victory celebration when, with only one minute left in the final match between Sting and Flair, neither wrestler appeared headed for victory.

"Dammit," Luger cursed later. "They were laying in the ring doing nothing. Only an idiot like Flair could have turned that situation into a loss."

Flair was equally stunned. With 20 seconds remaining, Flair tried to apply the figure-four leglock.



Sting, however, grabbed Flair's neck, executed a perfect cradle, and got the pin and the 20 points he needed to become the NWA's first Iron Man.

"I give him a lot of credit," Flair said. "In that situation, it's either a draw or I'm going to win by submission. He caught me by surprise."

Flair was a gracious loser. He shook Sting's hand, then watched—with apparent concern—as Ole and Arn Anderson bounded into the ring and confronted Sting. A Horsemen-style attack seemed certain, but the Andersons instead raised Sting's arms in victory. A display of friendship?



Sting pins Flair to win the match and become the Iron Man. The "Stinger" was proud to win the distinction, but wants the World championship above all else.

Maybe not. Flair wrestled much of the Sting match in his pre-1989 rulebreaking mode. When Sting won, Flair realized he had a serious challenger on his hands... unless he was able to further solidify their friendship.

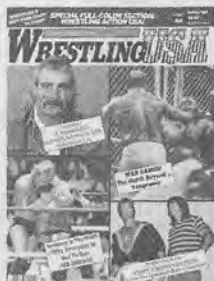
So that's what happened. Flair was pinned by Sting, but lost nothing. And now, despite his great performance, Sting can only look on while Luger grabs the title shots at Flair.

When the World champion is wrestling the U.S. champion, there isn't much left for anyone else.

Sting has been left out in the cold. ☐

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IRON TEAM WARRIORS

(Continued from page 35)

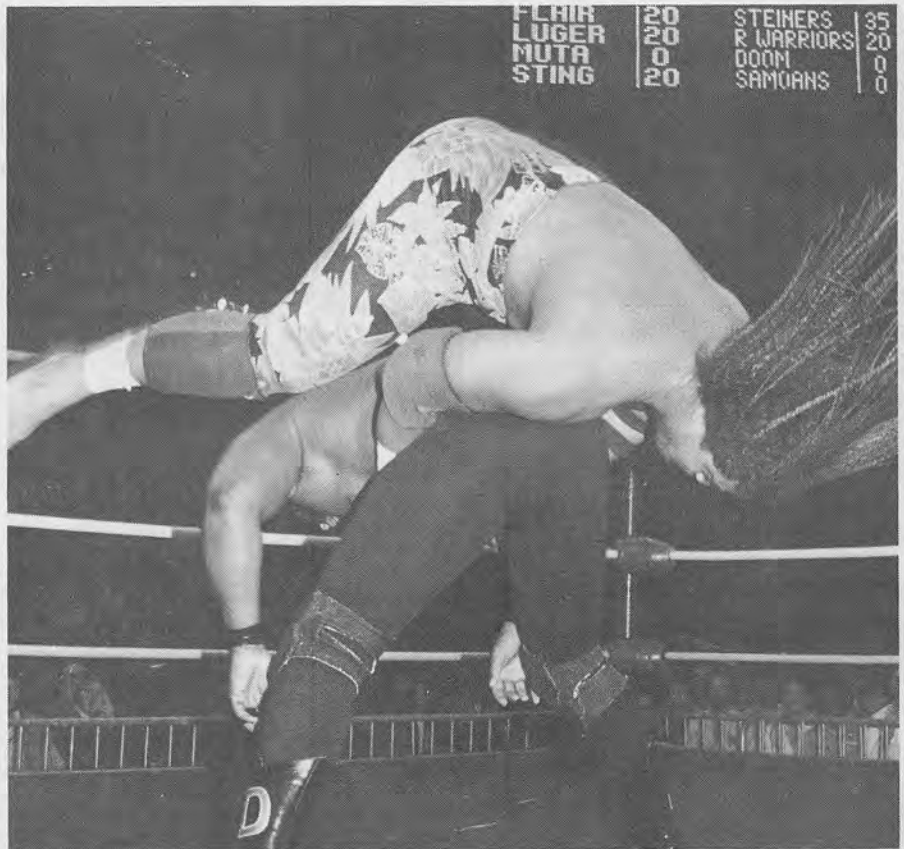
The final match, as it turned out, pitted the Samoans against the Warriors.

The Legion of Doom dominated from the outset, overcame Sir Oliver Humperdink's interference, and won it all when Hawk delivered a crushing flying clothesline from the top rope for the winning pin. The Steiners joined the celebration. The crowd erupted in ecstasy. The Warriors were doomed.

"It was a joke," Humperdink said later in the evening. "The Warriors are never gonna get a shot at the Steiners as long as they keep pandering to these nitwit fans."

Animal and Hawk, who have a history of controlling their own destinies with power and thinly veiled threats, have no control over this problem. Though their entire game plan is built around power, violence, stretching the rules, and double-teaming opponents into oblivion, the fans' love affair with the Legion of Doom continues.

"The fans love a team that says what it's going to do, then gets into the ring and does it," said Paul Ellering, manager of the Warriors. "You're talking about a couple of men who don't take any crap and never let a

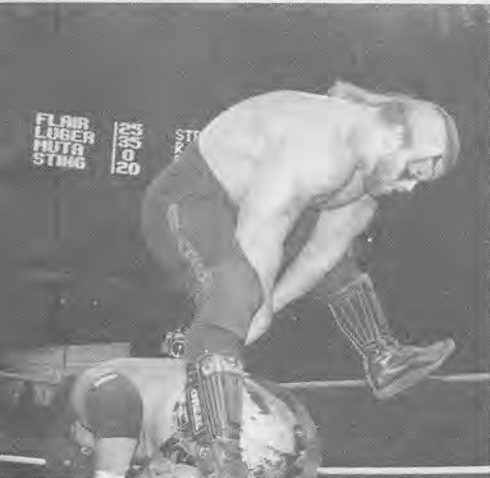


Samoan Savage tries a sunset flip on Doom II (above) and chokes Scott Steiner (below). Rick Steiner gives Road Warrior Animal a belly-to-belly suplex (bottom left).



little injury get in their way. They're winners. Fans love winners."

But even Ellering concedes that the Warriors' loss to the Steiners was damaging. "It gave those NWA brains something to fall back on," Ellering said. "They don't want my men wrestling the Steiners for the belts because there are already too many rulebreaking teams in the federation. They'd rather see the Steiners wrestle Doom or The Skyscrapers. But ask the fans what they want. They'd take a Warriors-Steiners match in a heartbeat."



Animal leaps over Samoan Savage. Ironically, the Warriors' victory could make it harder for them to get title shots.

Even the Steiners said they'd be willing to wrestle the Warriors. "They deserve it and we deserve it," Rick Steiner said. "After all, we're the two best teams in the federation, right? And shouldn't the best teams wrestle for the title? And shouldn't the fans get what they want?"

For once, Rick makes sense. NWA officials, on the other hand, refuse to make any sense at all. In fact, they won't even comment on the situation.

So the Warriors are left with almost no alternative but to turn against the Steiners. A brutal attack might be one way to get their point across; it worked for Terry Funk when he wanted a shot at Ric Flair's NWA World title.

The horrified promoters would then sign the Warriors to title matches. Maybe the fans would finally boo Hawk and Animal.

Maybe that's the only way for The Road Warriors to get what they deserve. ☐

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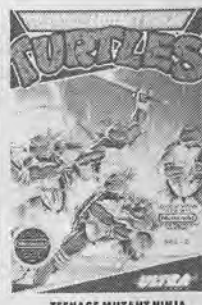
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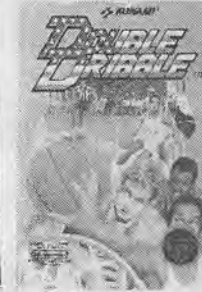
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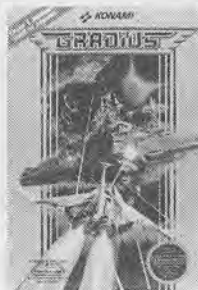
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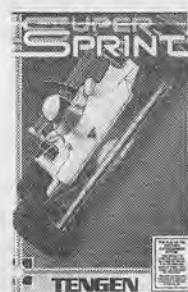
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INSIDE WRESTLING'S OFFICIAL RATINGS

TOP 15

- | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1— RIC FLAIR
NWA World champion | 4— LEX LUGER
U.S. champion | 8— LARRY ZBYSZKO
AWA World champion | 12— DINO BRAVO
No. 3 contender: WWF title |
| 2— HULK HOGAN
WWF World champion | 5— CURT HENNIG
No. 2 contender: WWF title | 9— THE GREAT MUTA
NWA TV champion | 13— KERRY VON ERICH
No. 1 contender: USWA title |
| 3— ULTIMATE WARRIOR
WWF Intercontinental champion | 6— STING
No. 1 contender: U.S. title | 10— LARRY CAMERON
Stampede N. American champion | 14— BILL DUNDEE
CWA champion |
| | 7— JERRY LAWLER
USWA and Texas champion | 11— RODDY PIPER
No. 4 contender: WWF title | 15— SCOTTY THE BODY
PNW champion |

NWA

- | | | | |
|---|--|--|--|
| 1— RIC FLAIR
243, Minneapolis, MN | 4— THE GREAT MUTA
245, Tokyo, Japan | 8— MIKE ROTUNDO
245, Syracuse, NY | 12— NORMAN THE LUNATIC
380, Saginaw, MI |
| 2— LEX LUGER
268, Chicago, IL | 5— TOM ZENK
237, Minneapolis, MN | 9— KENDALL WINDHAM
220, Sweetwater, TX | 13— ROAD WARRIOR ANIMAL
285, Chicago, IL |
| 3— STING
260, Venice Beach, CA | 6— BUZZ SAWYER
240, St. Petersburg, FL | 10— KEVIN SULLIVAN
252, Boston, MA | 14— DAN SPIVEY
300, Tampa, FL |
| | 7— BRIAN PILLMAN
226, Cincinnati, OH | 11— TOMMY RICH
248, Hendersonville, TN | 15— EDDIE GILBERT
222, Lexington, TN |

AWA

- | | | | |
|---|--|---|--|
| 1— LARRY ZBYSZKO
248, Pittsburgh, PA | 4— THE TROOPER
243, Charlotte, NC | 8— DOUG SOMERS
245, Minneapolis, MN | 12— THE RUSSIAN BRUTE
285, Moscow, Russia |
| 2— MR. SAITO
247, Tokyo, Japan | 5— PAT TANAKA
226, Tokyo, Japan | 9— JOHN NORD
316, Bozeman, MT | 13— COL. DeBEERS
248, Cape Town, S. Africa |
| 3— PAUL DIAMOND
230, Thunder Bay, Ontario | 6— TOMMY JAMMER
265, St. Joseph, MO | 10— AKIO SATO
238, Tokyo, Japan | 14— MIKE GEORGE
265, St. Joseph, MO |
| | 7— JONNIE STEWART
242, Pacific Palisades, CA | 11— BARON VON RASCHKE
271, W. Berlin, Germany | 15— SGT. SLAUGHTER
310, Parris Island, SC |

WWF

- | | | | |
|---|---|--|--|
| 1— HULK HOGAN
302, Venice Beach, CA | 4— DINO BRAVO
256, Montreal, Quebec | 8— RICK MARTEL
236, Quebec, City, Quebec | 12— BAD NEWS BROWN
280, New York, NY |
| 2— ULTIMATE WARRIOR
280, Queens, NY | 5— RODDY PIPER
231, Glasgow, Scotland | 9— DUSTY RHODES
302, Austin, TX | 13— TITO SANTANA
245, Toluca, Mexico |
| 3— CURT HENNIG
235, Minneapolis, MN | 6— RANDY SAVAGE
245, Sarasota, FL | 10— JAKE ROBERTS
246, Stone Mountain, GA | 14— JIMMY SNUKA
250, Fiji Islands |
| | 7— RICK RUDE
246, Robbinsdale, MN | 11— BRUTUS BEEFCAKE
273, San Francisco, CA | 15— TED DIBIASE
247, Omaha, NB |

MOST POPULAR

- | | | | |
|--|--|--|--|
| 1— HULK HOGAN
Last month: No. 1 Most Popular | 4— RODDY PIPER
Last month: No. 4 Most Popular | 8— DUSTY RHODES
Last month: No. 8 Most Popular | 12— JAKE ROBERTS
Last month: No. 14 Most Popular |
| 2— RIC FLAIR
Last month: No. 2 Most Popular | 5— THE ULTIMATE WARRIOR
Last month: No. 5 Most Popular | 9— BRIAN PILLMAN
Last month: No. 10 Most Popular | 13— SGT. SLAUGHTER
Last month: No. 12 Most Popular |
| 3— STING
Last month: No. 3 Most Popular | 6— RICK STEINER
Last month: No. 7 Most Popular | 10— KERRY VON ERICH
Last month: No. 11 Most Popular | 14— OWEN HART
Last month: unrated |
| | 7— BRUTUS BEEFCAKE
Last month: No. 6 Most Popular | 11— NORMAN THE LUNATIC
Last month: No. 13 Most Popular | 15— JEFF JARRETT
Last month: No. 15 Most Popular |

MOST HATED

- | | | | |
|---|--|--|---|
| 1— LEX LUGER
Last month: No. 1 Most Hated | 4— RANDY SAVAGE
Last month: No. 5 Most Hated | 8— DINO BRAVO
Last month: No. 10 Most Hated | 12— BIG BOSS MAN
Last month: No. 12 Most Hated |
| 2— CURT HENNIG
Last month: No. 2 Most Hated | 5— ZEUS
Last month: No. 6 Most Hated | 9— THE GREAT MUTA
Last month: No. 4 Most Hated | 13— SCOTTY THE BODY
Last month: No. 14 Most Hated |
| 3— RICK RUDE
Last month: No. 3 Most Hated | 6— JERRY LAWLER
Last month: No. 7 Most Hated | 10— LARRY ZBYSZKO
Last month: No. 9 Most Hated | 14— BILLY TRAVIS
Last month: No. 13 Most Hated |
| | 7— TED DIBIASE
Last month: unrated | 11— BUZZ SAWYER
Last month: No. 11 Most Hated | 15— LARRY CAMERON
Last month: No. 15 Most Hated |

TAG TEAMS

- | | | |
|--|--|---|
| 1— RICK & SCOTT STEINER
NWA World tag team champions | 6— MIKE ENOS & WAYNE BLOOM
AWA World tag team champions | 11— ROBERT FULLER & BRIAN LEE
USWA tag team champions |
| 2— THE ROAD WARRIORS
No. 3 contenders: NWA tag team title | 7— THE HART FOUNDATION
No. 3 contenders: WWF tag team title | 12— THE WILD SAMOANS
No. 5 contenders: NWA tag team title |
| 3— ANDRE THE GIANT & HAKU
WWF World tag team champions | 8— OLE & ARN ANDERSON
No. 4 contenders: NWA tag team title | 13— THE BOLSHEVIKS
No. 4 contenders: WWF tag team title |
| 4— DEMOLITION
No. 1 contenders: WWF tag team title | 9— THE POWERS OF PAIN
No. 2 contenders: WWF tag team title | 14— PAUL DIAMOND & THE TROOPER
No. 1 contenders: AWA tag team title |
| 5— THE MIDNIGHT EXPRESS
No. 3 contenders: NWA tag team title | 10— DOOM
No. 1 contenders: NWA tag team title | 15— THE BUSHWHACKERS
No. 5 contenders: WWF tag team title |

These ratings are compiled by the editors with the assistance of promoters, wrestlers, and reporters around the country, and are based on won-lost records for the past month, quality of opposition, and the inherent skill of each wrestler . . . "Most Popular" and "Most Hated" ratings are based on nationwide surveys of wrestling fans and on mail that comes to our offices . . . Championships marked with asterisks on the "Roll Call of Champions" indicate title changes that have taken place since our previous issue . . . The information under the championship listing indicates the date that champion won the title, who the former champion was, and where the match took place .

For period ended December 29, 1989

ROLL CALL OF CHAMPIONS

ALL-JAPAN ASIAN TAG TEAM CHAMPIONS:

TOSHIKAKI KAWADA & SAMSON FUYUKI

(October 20, 1989; from Dan Kroffat & Doug Furnas; Nagoya, Japan)

ALL-JAPAN INTERNATIONAL CHAMPION: JUMBO TSURUTA

(October 11, 1989; from Genichiro Tenryu; Yokohama, Japan)

* ALL-JAPAN TAG TEAM CHAMPIONS: STAN HANSEN & GENICHIRO TENRYU

(December 6, 1989; tournament final over Jumbo Tsuruta & Yoshiaki Yatsu; Tokyo, Japan)

ALL-JAPAN JR. HEAVYWEIGHT CHAMPION: MASANOBU FUCHI

(October 20, 1989; from Joe Malenko; Nagoya, Japan)

ALL-JAPAN UNITED NATIONAL CHAMPION: JUMBO TSURUTA

(October 11, 1989; from Genichiro Tenryu; Yokohama, Japan)

ALL-JAPAN WOMEN'S INTERNATIONAL CHAMPION: TITLE VACANT

(most recently held by Lioness Asuka)

ALL-JAPAN WOMEN'S CHAMPION: MINAMI TOYOTA

(November 18, 1989; tournament final over Mika Takahashi; Tokyo, Japan)

ALL-JAPAN WOMEN'S TAG TEAM CHAMPIONS:

YUMIKO HOTTA & MITSUKO NISHIWAKI

(July 18, 1989; from Akira Hokuto & Shizuka Minami; Tokyo, Japan)

AWA WORLD CHAMPION: LARRY ZBYSZKO

(February 7, 1989; battle royal victory to fill vacant title; St. Paul, MN)

AWA WORLD TAG TEAM CHAMPIONS: THE DESTRUCTION CREW

(October 1, 1989; tournament final over Greg Gagne & Paul Diamond; Rochester, MN)

* AWA WORLD WOMEN'S CHAMPION: CANDI DEVINE

(December 6, 1989; tournament match over Judy Martin; Toronto, Ontario)

BRITISH COMMONWEALTH CHAMPION: BRUCE HART

(October 14, 1989; from Gama Singh; Lethbridge, Alberta)

CWA CHAMPION: BILL DUNDEE

(November 19, 1989; from Dirty White Boy; Memphis, TN)

CWA TAG TEAM CHAMPIONS: TITLE VACANT

(most recently held by The Rock 'n' Roll Express)

ICW CHAMPION: TONY ATLAS

(February 11, 1989; from Joe Savoldi; Presque Isle, ME)

* ICW TAG TEAM CHAMPIONS: THE UNDERTAKERS

(December 11, 1989; over Joe Savoldi & Vic Steamboat for held-up title; Newark, NJ)

IWGP CHAMPION: BIG VAN VADER

(August 10, 1989; from Riki Choshu; Tokyo, Japan)

IWGP INTERNATIONAL TAG TEAM CHAMPIONS:

MASA SAITO & SHINYA HASHIMOTO

(September 20, 1989; from Riki Choshu & Takayuki Izuki; Osaka, Japan)

IWGP JR. HEAVYWEIGHT CHAMPION: NAOKI SANO

(August 10, 1989; from Jushin Riger; Tokyo, Japan)

NWA TV CHAMPION: THE GREAT MUTA

(September 3, 1989; defeated Sting for held up title; Atlanta, GA)

NWA WORLD CHAMPION: RIC FLAIR

(May 7, 1989; from Rick Steamboat; Nashville, TN)

NWA WORLD TAG TEAM CHAMPIONS: RICK & SCOTT STEINER

(November 1, 1989; from Michael Hayes & Jim Garvin; Atlanta, GA)

PACIFIC NORTHWEST CHAMPION: SCOTTY THE BODY

(October 14, 1989; from Rex King; Portland, OR)

PACIFIC NORTHWEST TAG TEAM CHAMPIONS: TITLE HELD UP

(most recently held by The Grappler & Bryan Adams)

PACIFIC WRESTLING FEDERATION CHAMPION: JUMBO TSURUTA

(October 11, 1989; from Genichiro Tenryu; Yokohama, Japan)

* PACIFIC WRESTLING FEDERATION INT'L TAG TEAM CHAMPIONS:

STAN HANSEN & GENICHIRO TENRYU

(December 6, 1989; tournament final over Jumbo Tsuruta & Yoshiaki Yatsu; Tokyo, Japan)

PWF (FLORIDA) CHAMPION: STEVE KEIRN

(July 9, 1989; from Kendall Windham; Orlando, FL)

PWF (FLORIDA) TAG TEAM CHAMPIONS: THE BOUNTY HUNTERS

(November 14, 1989; Lou Perez & Mark Starr; Tampa, FL)

STAMPEDE NORTH AMERICAN CHAMPION: LARRY CAMERON

(April 28, 1989; from Davey Boy Smith; Calgary, Alberta)

STAMPEDE INTERNATIONAL TAG TEAM CHAMPIONS: TITLE VACANT

(most recently held by Apocalypse & Destruction—the Blackharts)

U.S. CHAMPION: LEX LUGER

(May 22, 1989; from Michael Hayes; Bluefield, WV)

USWA CHAMPION: JERRY LAWLER

(December 13, 1988; from Kerry Von Erich; Chicago, IL)

USWA TAG TEAM CHAMPIONS: ROBERT FULLER & BRIAN LEE

(December 1, 1989; tournament final; Dallas, TX)

* USWA TEXAS CHAMPION: JERRY LAWLER

(December 15, 1989; from Kerry Von Erich; Dallas, TX)

WWC CARIBBEAN CHAMPION: MIGUEL PEREZ JR.

(November 4, 1989; from Rip Rogers; Bayamon, Puerto Rico)

WWC CARIBBEAN TAG TEAM CHAMPIONS: THE MERCENARIES

(October 7, 1989; from Miguel Perez Jr. & Hurricane Castillo Jr.; Bayamon, Puerto Rico)

WWC JR. HEAVYWEIGHT CHAMPION: SUPER MEDIC

(July 29, 1989; from Chicky Starr; Caguas, Puerto Rico)

WWC PUERTO RICAN CHAMPION: INVADER I

(October 7, 1989; from Ivan Koloff; Bayamon, Puerto Rico)

WWC TAG TEAM CHAMPIONS: CHRIS & MARK YOUNGBLOOD

(October 7, 1989; from Rip Rogers & Abughdadien; Bayamon, Puerto Rico)

* WWC UNIVERSAL CHAMPION: LEO BURKE

(December 17, 1989; from Carlos Colon; Mayaguez, Puerto Rico)

WWC WOMEN'S CHAMPION: WENDI RICHTER

(July 28, 1987; from Monster Ripper; Trinidad, West Indies)

WWF INTERCONTINENTAL CHAMPION: ULTIMATE WARRIOR

(August 28, 1989; from Rick Rude; East Rutherford, NJ)

WWF WORLD CHAMPION: HULK HOGAN

(April 2, 1989; from Randy Savage; Atlantic City, NJ)

* WWF WORLD TAG TEAM CHAMPIONS: ANDRE THE GIANT & HAKU

(December 13, 1989; from Demolition; Huntsville, AL)

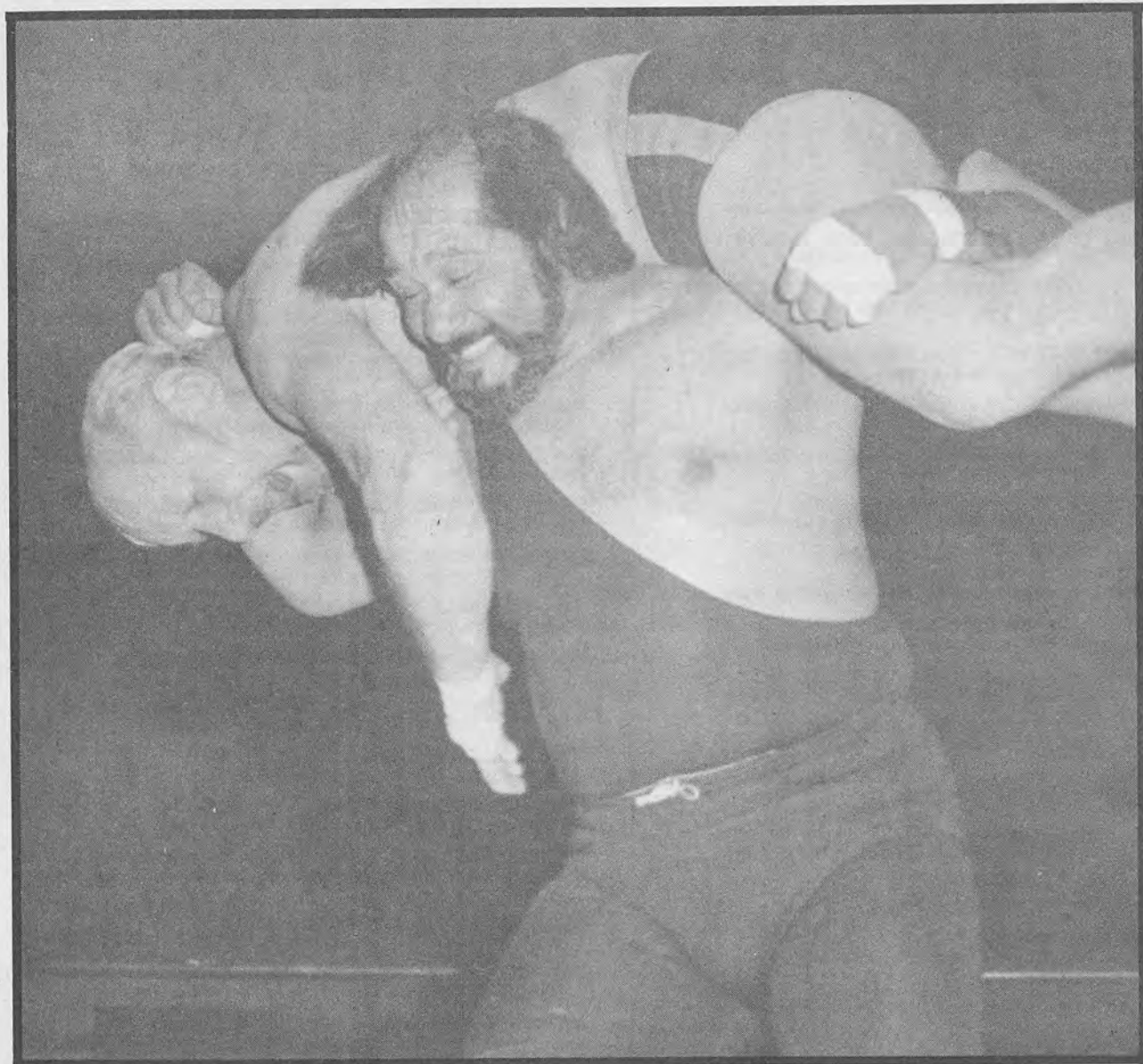
WWF WOMEN'S CHAMPION: ROCKIN' ROBIN

(October 7, 1988; from Sherri Martel; Paris, France)

Blast From The Past

This Month In Wrestling History

"Marathon Mayhem"



DORY FUNK SR. vs. CYCLONE NEGRO

February 17, 1972

Those who wonder where former NWA contender Terry Funk gets his stamina need only look back to the career of his father, Dory Funk Sr., who was one of the most rugged grapplers ever to hail from Texas. Dory's hatred for Cyclone Negro was so intense that he challenged the rulebreaker to a unique Texas death match in his hometown of Amarillo. The match could not end until one man lacked the strength to continue. By the time this incredible one-hour-and-44-minute marathon was over, both men were bloody and almost ready to pass out. Funk used a simple punch to the head to win the match, 15 falls to 12, and take home a \$7,700 purse. Both men were hospitalized for an entire week after one of the most intensely violent bouts of modern times.

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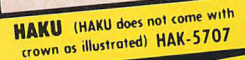
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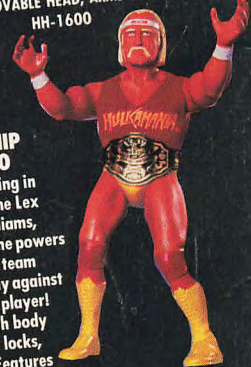
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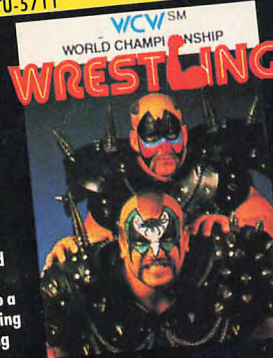
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